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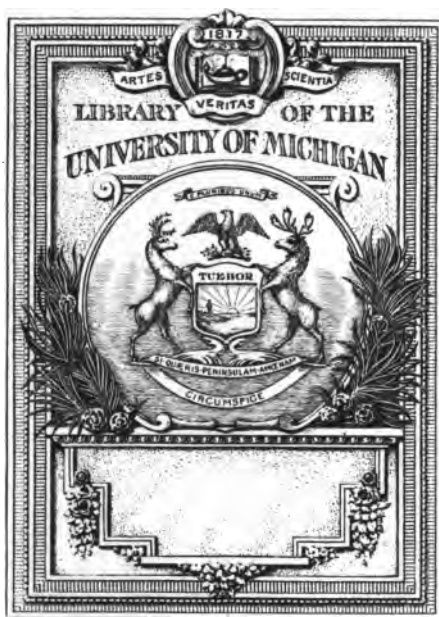
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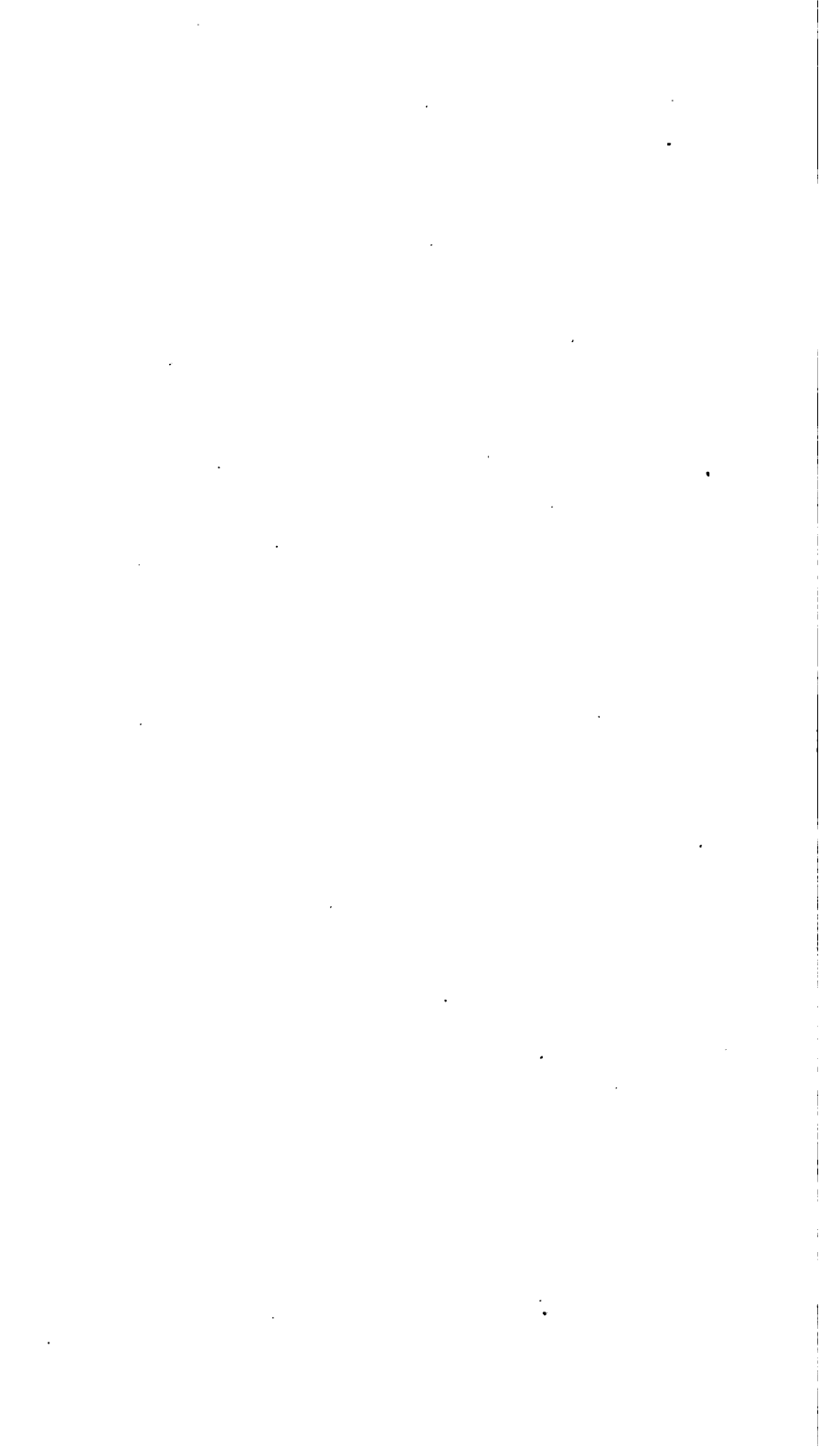
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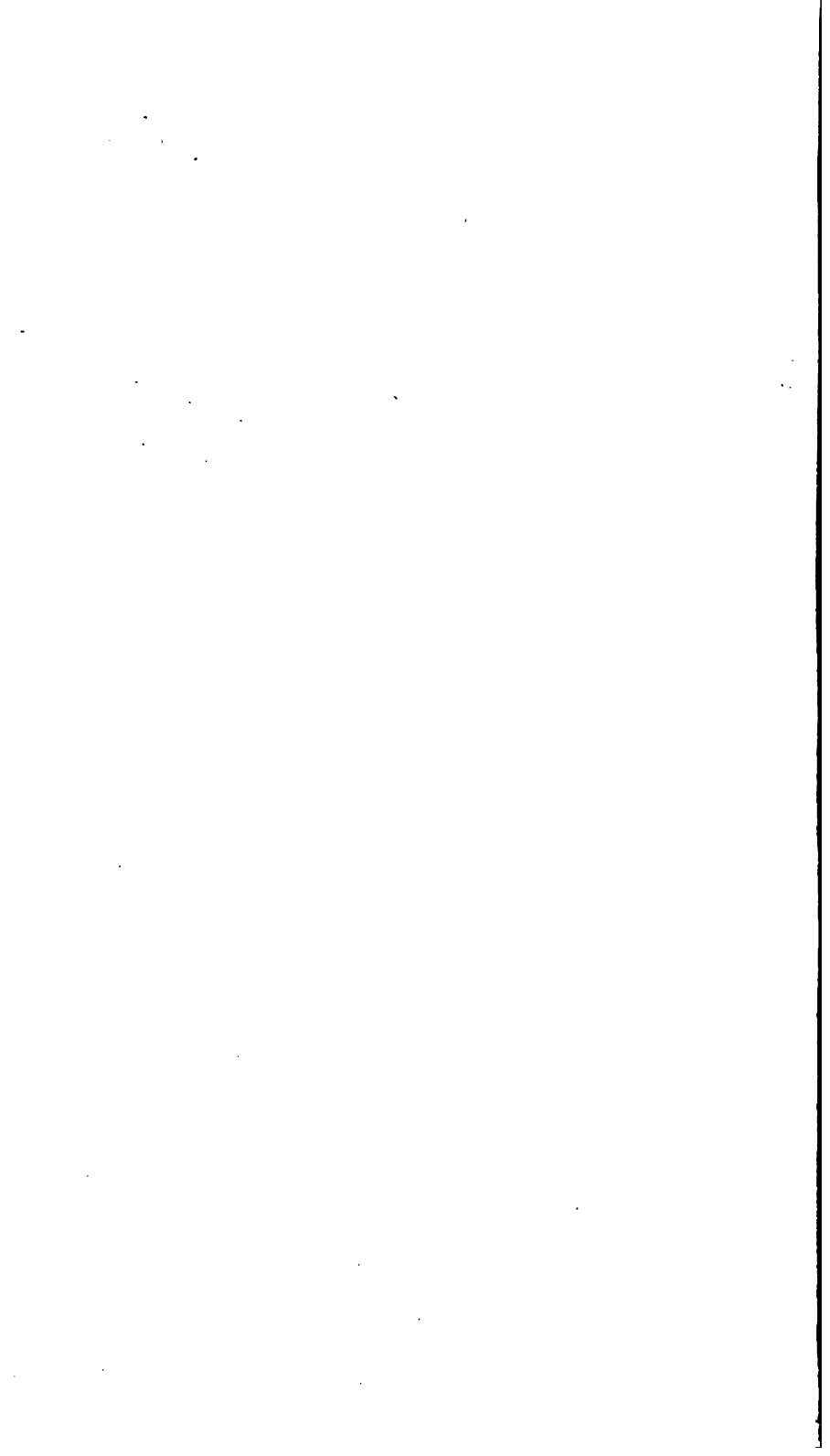
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# LETTERS,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

*CONCERT of PRINCES,*

AND THE

DISMEMBERMENT

OF

*POLAND and FRANCE.*

(First published in the MORNING CHRONICLE between  
July 20, 1792, and June 25, 1793.)

WITH

CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS.

BY A CALM OBSERVER.

*Vaughan, Benjamin, suggested*

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THE SECOND EDITION.

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*Facilis Descensus Averni.*

VIRG.

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# CONTENTS.

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## P R E F A C E.

*Containing an Inquiry whether Nations are to be governed by Foreigners, or by themselves; with Remarks upon certain Parts of the Doctrines of Mr. Paine and Mr. Burke respecting Revolutions* - - - i

## L E T T E R S.

I. <i>On the Abandonment of Poland by Prussia, with an Address to the Empress of Russia</i>	-	-	43
II. <i>On the Concert of Princes</i>	-	-	62
III. <i>The same Subject continued</i>	-	-	135
IV. <i>On the Duke of Brunswick's Manifesto, with an Address to the King of France</i>	-	-	145
V. <i>History of the first Partition of Poland, abridged from the Works of the late King of Prussia, with Remarks</i>	-	-	161
VI.* <i>Positive Arguments for negotiating a Peace with France</i>	-	-	190
VII. <i>The same Subject continued</i>	-	-	210
VIII. <i>General View of the ostensible Cause and Nature of the War with France, and of the Motives for Peace,</i>			221
<i>Miscellaneous Extracts from a Letter not inserted in this Collection</i>	-	-	257

\* The numbers of this and the following letters were erroneously given in the first edition.

A 2

IX. *Proofs*

## C O N T E N T S.

IX. <i>Proofs that the System of Profelytism and Fraternity is pursued by old Governments</i>	260
X. <i>Remarks on these Proofs, with an Exhortation in Favour of Peace</i>	273
XI. <i>On the Death of Louis XVI. with Remarks, and a Review of the Subject of the preceding Letters</i>	310

## P O S T S C R I P T.

<i>Containing Remarks on the Declarations, made by Authority, in the British Parliament and from the Throne, in June, 1793, respecting the Continuation of the War with France</i>	329
--	-----

## A P P E N D I X.

I. <i>Proof that France did not declare War, till obliged to do so by England</i>	365
II. <i>Objections to negotiating with France removed</i>	373
III. <i>Extracts from Mr. Burke's Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, in Favour of the Polish Revolution,</i>	389

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# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

*FIRST EDITION.*

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**T**HE following pages contain all which I have written respecting the Concert of Princes, and the Dismemberment of Poland and of France. Two additional Letters, respecting the war with France, are inserted in the Appendix. These, with my Preface and the Postscript, (together with two Letters and a set of remarks on the subject of the French revolution, here omitted, as irrelative to the general object,) comprehend every thing which has appeared, in any shape, under the signature of the CALM OBSERVER.

Very few alterations have been made in these papers, except to do justice to my own ideas, for which purpose I have been obliged to recast various passages. It would scarcely seem decorous to the public, to confess how little time (snatched commonly at distant intervals) I have been able to dedicate to my subject; but, pressed by its importance, I have in every particular sacrificed precision to speed, trusting to the opportunity of a republication of what I had written, for the means of revising it. — Whether events will be such, as shall correspond with my conjectures, is a question infinitely important to the public, but little so to my



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my own reputation ; for, where *some* decision or other is requisite, it is enough to have proposed the opinion which was most advisable at the *moment* ; it being often wise to guard against that which is only probable, or even possible. " After all, (says Sir Wm Temple,) nothing is so " hard, as to give *wise counsel* before events ; and nothing " so easy, as after them to make *wise reflections* : Many " things seem true in reason and prove false in experience ; " many that are weakly consulted are executed with success." If I have resorted, therefore, to conjectures, it has by means arisen from a wanton spirit of *wagering against events*, in order to prove myself gifted with foresight ; for none are less inclined to hazard their opinions upon matters at issue, than those who are obliged deliberately to record them ; but, as it is clearly the part of prudence to exercise *forethought*, I have used the liberty of an Englishman in questioning the solidity of that forethought, which has been employed by our ministry. If I have at any time gone beyond conjecture, I have erred against my own rules ; but my caution at times insensibly deserted me, as I conceived my general object impregnable, from having a succession of considerations behind which they stood intrenched, all of which must in turn fail, before I could prove ultimately mistaken.

It is here proper to remind the reader, that it is necessary, in perusing each letter, to refer to its date, as a farther excuse for the fallibility and nature of its contents.

As these papers have been void throughout of all concert, and as the facts they contain have been derived solely from my own sources of information, allowances are due, and will be made, for a multitude of imperfections.

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# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE  
*SECOND EDITION.*

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**I**N this edition I have added nothing worthy of mention, and I have expunged as little. To simplify, to elucidate, and to remove inaccuracies, either accidental or my own, has been a principal object. — As to the repeated introduction of the same topics, (the natural consequence of detached essays, written at distant intervals, to be perused by fluctuating readers,) since it has occurred in a varied manner and upon important subjects, no change has been thought requisite respecting it.



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## ERRATA, &c.

Page. Line.

- lii. 10, for *is*, read *was*.  
xvii. 9, after *and*, insert *that of*.  
xxiv. 3, for *injustice*; for, read *injustice*. Hence.  
xxxiii. 6, for *it*, read *is*.  
xxxv. 13, for *to make*, read *of making*.  
48, 20, for *is it*, read *it is*.  
[N. B. Throw ten pages into a note; beginning from *I shall first touch upon Germany*, in page 67, and ending at *exact- ed the sacrifice*, in page 77.]  
70, 20, for *or Prussia*, read *to Prussia*.  
101, 19, for *armies*, read *despotic states*.  
116, 6, for *conspirators in*, read *conspiracy of*.  
117, 13, for *statement of its situation*, read *proof, that the power of its new government is sufficiently solid to admit of our co-operating with it*.  
137, 7, for *ccharge*, read *change*.  
178, 30, after *safeguard*, insert *to their neighbours*.  
183, 9, after *may*, insert *ultimately*.  
184, 30, for *trade*, read *supply*.  
186, 12, for *Pussia*, read *Russia*.  
206, 2 & 3, dele the parenthesis.  
235, 26, 27, & 28, dele from *under down to re-appear*.  
261, 21, for 1793, read 1761.
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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

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**T**HE following Letters exhibit various incidents and remarks respecting the revolutions of France and of Poland; but as they are chiefly of a practical nature, and say little of the *revolutionary doctrines*, which of late have occupied the public mind, this defect will be supplied by a *preface*, which those will pass by who are displeased with argumentative matter.

It is here then curious to observe, that the same persons who affirm, that *foreigners* may interfere in the government of another country; assert, that the *natives* of that country are altogether destitute of such a privilege respecting themselves. The two opinions, however, are perfectly consistent; for they both imply, that nations have no rights; and that princes, either foreign or native, must be free from check in all they meditate against them.

The *facts*, which the following pages exhibit, on the subject of the *interference of foreigners* in matters of internal government, of themselves display a levity of motive, a profligacy of principle, a treachery of means, and an extremity of cruelty, which, in some degree, prove the falsity of the principle by the nature of its consequences. — But there is still room for new *reasoning* on the same subject, in addition to that contained in my letters.

We acknowledge then, in private life, that if any individual *speaks* uninvited, in the concerns of another, it is impertinent; and still more, if he *acts* in them: but epithets are wanting to describe the character of him, who intermeddles in the concerns of another by force. — Every great collection of men however, upon its respective territory, whatever be its latitude, color, and description, is equally its own master, with an individual. Nations, indeed, are as *units* to one another, even in a still stronger sense than individuals, because in private concerns there is a general tribunal for distributive justice, in order to protect the injured; but as no such appeal and protection exist with respect to injured nations, the rule in morals applies, that principles require to be sedulously upheld in proportion to the risk of their infraction and the magnitude of the interest at stake. — Indeed, the mutual appeal to *arms*, in the disputes between one government and another, shews how little sway at any time is  
left

left for *justice* between them; and consequently how strict should be the abstinence from all struggle, directed with a view to internal interference. — What has been said will appear still more clear, if we recollect, that the competence of a court of justice to try a given case, implies the possession of the means of obtaining evidence respecting it, especially by confronting the parties; and that, without this is done in the cases in question, the interfering power acts with still more injustice, than is charged upon the convention when sitting in judgment upon Louis XVI. Besides, war, which is the agent which must, in general, be employed upon these occasions, presents a very *expensive*, as well as an *uncertain*, court of judicature; and it seems highly improper for any government to charge its subjects with the invidious burthen of fighting, to seek to convert another nation. — In short, none should govern, who do not partake in the consequences of their own government; and still more, none should govern, who have different and even opposite interests respecting the governed; or who are ignorant of their local circumstances, their mental and other habits.

If nations, however, are at any time to submit to a controlling power from without, it can only be to that of other nations perfectly *self-governed*, and who, therefore, may claim kindred feelings with them; though even these must confine themselves to cases of *natural justice*, and not over-rule in matters

of mere *political option*. — But in no sense are tyrants or arbitrary monarchs to interfere, who are only parts, and the worst parts, of a nation; whose anxiety is not to govern well, but merely to govern; who, in foreign politics, never consult any thing, but their own interest; whom absolute power has debased in their own persons; who, by absolute power, reciprocally debase their people; and who, by dreading to give efficacy to the wishes of their own nation, prove that they can have little attachment to the happiness of any other. — What, in general, is an *arbitrary prince*, but one who begins life with a spoiled education; whose passions are afterwards left unresisted; from whom truth is anxiously concealed; whose very faults are flattered; who conceives himself born to rule; who supposes that every enterprize, against his neighbours, is permissible, which is practicable; who deems wars only blameable, when they are unsuccessful; and who thinks that he has done little to figure in history, unless he alters the boundaries of geography without, and increases the submissiveness of his people within? — If this be the portrait applicable to the generality of arbitrary princes, I ask, whether we see in it any encouragement to trust them with the fate of more nations, than those they control already; and whether those politicians deserve well of mankind who seek to propagate the principle, that arbitrary princes can commonly decide better for foreign nations, than those nations can decide for

## P R E F A C E.

for themselves; and who thus open the way for them to legislate for mankind universally? I allow, that nations may easily do wrong; but since arbitrary princes so seldom *seek* to do right, and so seldom perform well the right they seek to do, I must affirm, that no principle ought to be laid down which is so likely to be fatal in every instance of its practice, as that in question.

But even between nation and nation, *self-interest* is no just ground for intermeddling in matters of internal government, against the wish of a majority. — What, for example, should we say, in private life, to the man who should prevent his neighbour, by force, from improving his estate, lest he should undersell him at market; or from educating his children well, lest they should become superior to his own; or from employing good counsellors, lest he should be unsuccessful in a law-suit against him? And what should we say, if, in order to accomplish these unjust and injurious purposes, he added to force both devastation and murder? — But if these horrid means are not to be employed to obtain positive advantages, neither are they to be resorted to for averting small, or imaginary, *inconveniences*. For example, if the French write libels upon the British government; or if, in a manner still more speaking than by a libel, namely, by practice, they shall hereafter shew their new government, whatever it may be, to be preferable to our own; this will furnish no legitimate cause for obstructing their at-



tempts towards forming a government of their own choice. To silence the printing-presses of France is useless, because we have laws of our own, sufficient to prevent the circulation of any improper publication; and if the example of a better government in France should ever become obnoxious, the only legitimate antidote will be to improve our own; our predilection to our ancient government being sufficient to prevent a rash adoption of foreign novelties. But, alas! a hazard so consoling to a well-wisher of mankind seems not to be very imminent. — And as to any risks offering to our external safety, commerce, or other national object, from France, as her government stands constituted at present; they ought infinitely more to be feared, in case of France being re-united (through the medium of foreign interposition) to all and more than those *foreign allies*, by which France has heretofore rendered herself formidable, as I shall hereafter demonstrate.

But may we not interfere casually, and as it were *obiter*, it may be said, in the government of France, in the course of our foreign warfare with her; and impart a government to her more suited to our own purposes and to her own happiness, than that which she at present possesses? — I answer, No. For, first, it would be a violation of principle; and principles are never more fatally violated, than when the pretext for it is plausible. *A little and a little* is easily made into a *little more*; a collateral

lateral object, carried on under the cover of a principal one, is easily itself made into a principal one; and no political violence is apt to go to greater excess than that, which is perpetrated under the name of benevolence, because the merit of the motive is made an excuse for the villainy of the means. — But, secondly, if Great Britain takes up this pretence herself, she authorises it in others; and Austria and Prussia may then abuse the precedent in its widest latitude; and yet in exact proportion as Austria and Prussia have it in their *power* to commit abuses, so, in the same proportion, should we avoid furnishing them with any warrant for it. What will not Austria say to *us*, who have been the habitual rivals of France, if *we* pretend to regulate the government of France, and play the part of an *amicus curiæ*; and forbid the like indulgence to Austria; to Austria, the ally of the monarchy of France, the power which is *principal in the war*, and which has a family-motive for restoring a prince born from one of its own relations; and if for restoring the prince, by a like reason interested to provide for his future security. — But if we wish here to know what the idea of Austria is as to the measure of government now proper for France, and for maintaining the permanency of that measure, it may be seen from the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto; the object of which (as separate from its menaces and as never yet contradicted, except for the artful purposes of the

*moment*) is this — France must be governed by the will of *one* man, aided or not by counsellors, as he *alone* shall think proper; and every one, who shall be found to have contravened this, shall be liable to exemplary punishment. — To this language, Prussia has done more than subscribe; for she has imprisoned in a cruel manner La Fayette, for having dared to oppose arbitrary power in France, though he was the very man who prevented the institution of a republic upon the king's absconding in June 1791, when multitudes of the *aristocracy* would willingly have concurred in it; and she has moreover herself exhibited the parallel to that species of government in Prussia, and in the pursuit of her double partition of Poland. — But, if such a restoration and such a government shall actually take place in France, shall we not have to fear a close connection between the Austrian and Bourbon houses, far more formidable than the late family-compact; and to which it is easy for Prussia and Russia to become leagued? The confederates will willingly compliment Great Britain with being the first in the field, but will she not be made the last in the cabinet, the moment she wishes for peace upon any terms hostile to such a combination? — Consequently both principle and policy recommend that we should suffer France to remain independent under her own government, rather than allied to foreign powers under a prescribed one; and that  
we

we should not work our own ruin by injustice to France.

As to the pretence, that one portion of a nation may invite foreigners to act against the other portion of it; I answer, that *prima facie*, the necessity of calling in such aid implies a weakness in those who invoke the aid, which argues, that they are themselves the minority. — Next, the fable of the horse, inviting the succour of the man against the stag, shews the danger of such an alliance, ultimately, to *both* parts of a nation. Or, if we wish to see the same fact illustrated, without the help of fable, let us observe the conduct of Austria and Prussia towards the French emigrants; whose sufferings they overlook, and whose co-operation they scorn; doubtless, because, meaning to plunder France and to give it a government according to their own pleasure, they do not choose to seem to be under any obligation to the emigrants. — And if, in reply to this, it be said that the emigrants have behaved ill; does not this, if true, furnish a new proof of the impropriety of foreign interference, even upon a partial invitation; since the inviters, besides forming the minority of a nation, may also, by the very hypothesis, be destitute of the claim of merit.

Thus much is said on the subject of *foreign potentates interposing in the internal government of other nations*. — I shall next examine how far  
nations

nations have a right to *govern themselves*, that is, to regulate their own constitutions.

In order to prove (for Mr. Burke has put us under the strange necessity of proving it) that there is no criminality in the position, that a nation in case of necessity may rise as well to *assert* as to *defend* its rights, I shall again appeal to the circumstances of private life, as the best means of restoring us to our natural sentiments upon this subject, should either sophistry, habit, or passion, have perverted them.

If twenty-six men are shipwrecked upon a desert island, they agree upon their laws and elect their chiefs. Now, what is to preclude the like consent, if the number is twenty-six millions?—If *force* is employed, force may at any time undo its own work.

But these twenty-six *millions*, forming a nation, had *forefathers*, it is said, who established a government. Be it so; and they did right for *themselves*;—but can this constrain their successors? Did they take a bond from their children, as the condition of their birth, that they should have no other will but theirs? Did they not rather become fathers, in consequence of a great law of nature; and having thus left behind them their *own likeness*, may not these, with respect to government, do what their fathers did before them?—Look at other animals: they abandon their young when capable

capable of their own care ; mere parentage, with them, conveying no rights whatever. With men indeed, parental protection is more prolonged ; but their offspring *repay* this favour, not only to their own parents in their second childhood of old age, but to their own issue. — If their young are farther protected by a civil government, this benefit is clearly owing from the adult to all to whom they give existence, though it is a duty fulfilled in the way which best pleases them ; and which, having been fulfilled to them by *their* ancestors, will be fulfilled to *themselves* again by their descendants, when their life declines. — Thus there is a *chain of justice*, descending from father to son, where good offices are continually received and repaid, but often with a difference of persons. But no new duty is created thereby as to *civil government*, except that each generation ought to act therein for the best, according to its *own* judgment. — Agriculture, navigation, war, physic, and other arts and sciences, have their systems changed at pleasure ; and why not the art of government ? We notoriously change our municipal law also ; and what is a constitution, but municipal law in a larger sense ; or, in other words, that leading law, under which other laws are framed and executed ? — The objection to altering a constitution, is not so much lest it should be done improperly, but lest *quarrels* should thence ensue, and lest the *general obedience to civil government* should

should be shaken. Thus France, in changing its government, has given a general convulsion to Europe, merely because multitudes have been interested in the continuance of its abuses; for, whenever governments are naturally constituted, such undertakings are accomplished without inconvenience. Events of this sort, for example, create so little sensation in North-America, as scarcely to be noticed out of their respective states; though several of these have periodical revisions of their constitutions appointed, their conventions sitting at the very same instant with their legislatures.—The present question however in France, is not whether the nation shall *dissolve* an old government in order to form a new one; but, when an old government is *actually* dissolved and its return impracticable unless by force, how to proceed in replacing it.

But we have hitherto supposed, that an established government has been *matter of choice* in ancient times; whereas it has been, in general, matter of force and necessity. Is posterity then, in its endless generations, servilely to copy those, who have servilely been made to set an example? Are they to adhere to the government, not of their forefathers, but of those who *enslaved* their forefathers?—All men once were entitled to be free, because all possessed equal rights from nature; so that innovations are *originally* to be attributed to tyrants: that is, they have come from those, who  
have

have *perverted* civil government; and not from those, who have been made to yield to this perversion, often to a degree sufficient to enslave their minds equally with their bodies.—In short, the descendants of the free have a claim to freedom, as an inheritance; and the enslaved may avail themselves of the same force to assert a right, which others have employed, against their fathers and themselves, to inflict a wrong.

But if old governments have no preponderating claim on account of their antiquity, or of the force which established them, so neither have they in general, upon account of any *wisdom* shewn in their construction.—In most of the states of Europe, their original governments were formed when their legislators could neither *read* nor *write*; when the works also of the elder ancients literally lay buried in dust; when history, art, and science, were alike unknown, or unnoticed; and when conquests also were much in fashion. In short, these governments in general were fixed, when legislators possessed neither lights nor experience themselves, nor derived any from others; when the few lorded it over the many, and force stood in lieu of right.—The result, as might have been expected, was that *ignorance, injustice, wars, and intolerance*, have been *universal*; and a lapse of ten centuries had witnessed fewer improvements, than receive birth in ten years, in modern times, in consequence of *deviating* from that very system of antiquity,



antiquity, which it is proposed that Europe in general shall retain.—Notwithstanding the bigoted wish of the barons of England (*nulumus leges Angliæ mutari*), scarcely a shred of *Magna Charta* is at present looked to in practice: villenage is extinct, most of the feudal rights of the crown and of others are commuted, pecuniary compensation for crimes subsists only in a trifling degree, and the eyes of the British nation have opened to various other faults of the feudal ages; ages, which, in truth, never had any peculiar merit to boast, but the introduction of something like a plan of *legislative representation*, and of a *respect for women*.—In France, at the time of the revolution, many feudal evils existed in their original extent; and if the crown and aristocracy had seemed to correct some of them in their mode of administering them, yet it was not in a degree sufficient to keep pace with that blessing of modern times, the *public opinion*.—In short, so little reason is there to respect the sense, or the justice, of the ancients in matters of government, that there are few persons of education in the present day, whatever be their talents, if they have but an honest mind, who are not better qualified to delineate the plan of a good constitution for a *new* people, than any legislator of antiquity, whether taken on this, or on the other, side of the Christian æra; because, a modern legislator, with good intentions, would proceed upon four data, which would remedy every lesser error;

error; namely, general justice, a fair representation, economy, and simplicity.—The only proper terrors therefore, attending the reforms of the present age, are, lest they should be unnecessarily precipitate; for, if gradual, time will soon produce a *mutual* consent in their favour, from the highest to the lowest.

But we have still another proof, that men possess a right to change their governments from time to time, founded upon the fact that all governments are, in many respects, *liable to be changed involuntarily*.—This may occur not only from their internal corruption, which is sometimes in proportion to their degree of original perfection; but likewise from alterations which take place either in men, or in their circumstances. Thus, in a government, which in its primary state perhaps may have stood exactly balanced; if the merit of any degraded class of men becomes newly acknowledged (as that of persons without franchises in corporations); or if rights have unwisely been made local, where the scene of population has afterwards shifted itself; or if dominions have become subsequently either enlarged or diminished; in these, and similar instances, the living are clearly not to omit accommodating their government to the actual position of the day, because the dead had the supposed merit of suiting *their* government to the particular times in which they lived. In like manner, when the domestic effects of conquest disappear any where,

where, it is surely time to remove all political differences subsisting between the vanquished and their masters;—and, by consequence, the feudal system ought, every where, at present, to be abolished, as injuring both the public and the proprietors in it; for, though it *originated* from the system of conquest and of personal military service, yet, not only the practice is now in general obliterated, but even the very memory of it, except in history and law-books.—Since political wisdom then must thus necessarily be *relative*, because man, and his affairs, are given to change; by what cause is it, that discussion and experience, which are so serviceable in other cases, are to be useless with an object so varying as that of government. By what curious felicity is it, that the framers of a given government can have selected a form, not only the best possible for their *own* time, but even for *every other*?—Instead of selection however, it is known, that accident has been the parent of most governments; or else the will of a few who designed to serve themselves only, and not the public.

But there is one argument upon the subject of changes in government, which is perfectly *ad hominem*, and therefore incontrovertible by some of our opponents; which is, that various much applauded governments are in themselves *the acknowledged fruit of revolution*.—Thus, in England, two kings were dethroned within a  
space

space of fifty years, and one of them executed, before we attained that revolution in which we glory; and lawyers, like Judge Blackstone, gravely confess, that, if a revolution should return in this country, with the precise circumstances attending that in question, such a revolution would be warranted even by *law*. It is not a century since a revolution was made in the government of Scotland, by its union with England; and Ireland has lately undergone material variations, and has still others to experience.—What European government indeed of any consequence can boast of much antiquity, besides the Venetian, of which (for I am forced to observe upon it) the very antiquity is a reproach to human nature? since it exhibits a metropolis, which, in order to domineer over a large tract of *country*, takes part with one class of the country-inhabitants against the other; while its policy, with respect to the people of the *capital*, is either to fascinate them by amusements and debauchery, or else to awe them by a police, greatly depending upon informers or assassins; this vaunted republic having for its chief merit the talent of perpetuating its own mischiefs.—How singular then is it for any to affirm, that we are to submit to whatever government *is once established*, though established by tyrants; and, therefore, since tyranny in a given period is likely to have its turn in every country, and, when once in existence, is by the hypothesis

to be made immortal, that tyranny must, in time, over-shadow our globe, and blacken the fate of all mankind.—If this doctrine be thought too revolting for our sense and patience, where is the exception to it? If there is any, it must be this; that every government may be changed at all times by a majority (of a certain description) of those to whom it relates; and if this exception be admitted, the exception is large enough to destroy a rule so detestable.

The objection to alterations in political government, drawn from the evils attending the practical establishment of those alterations, has already been in part noticed, but requires to be farther slightly mentioned; for, to *what* are those evils generally owing? Surely not necessarily to the public, when making a demand of their rights; but commonly to those who resist the concession of these rights. To borrow the phrase of the vulgar, it is the *second* blow which makes the struggle. Why, then, are we to “refuse paying to a creditor the “hundred pounds we owe him, because he may “claim another hundred, to which he has no “title?” Is not this to commit an *actual* injustice in our own persons, from the fear of experiencing a *possible* injustice from others? And is not the denial the more remarkable, as the best hope, which prudent men ought to entertain of saving a valuable residue of their present privileges, is fairly to surrender a certain useless portion of them, at a period

period when they can command a *liberal commutation for the sacrifice*?

It is thus that I have endeavoured to prove, first, that nations ought not to be governed by *foreigners*; and, next, that they may of right govern *themselves*. The strong part, which I have here taken on the popular side, will give the more weight to my opinions respecting the limitations, which ought to have place as to *domestic* revolutions.—These opinions form a medium between those of Mr. Burke and Mr. Paine, as I shall prove by a short criticism upon each of these authors.

And, first, as to the *revolutionary* doctrines of Mr. Paine, (for, it is not my province here to examine his general notions of government.) I must observe, that, when he says, that the British nation has no constitution, he means, that it has had no *convention*; that is, none founded upon a direct and universal representation. A constitution, however, simply means, that system by which the ordinary governing powers of a nation are themselves confessedly regulated; and it is plain, that we have a constitution in this sense, notwithstanding (as in the case of the English common law) a part of it is *unwritten*. To say, at any time, that our constitution is endangered or perverted, is at once to admit that it has an essence; though the best proof of its being and vitality lies in the consenting feelings of the nation. Without troubling myself therefore

with a search how our constitution *originated*, or even what is its *nature*, or its *merit*; I content myself with the assurance that it *exists*, and has obtained the successive acquiescence of the people from one generation to another.

A language like this does not prevent either a resolute defence of that constitution, or a reform; for, it does not even preclude a revolution, which no one, however, more than myself can deprecate, unless under the most peculiar circumstances. It clearly acknowledges that the people (or nation) are the ultimate masters; but it implies also, that they have already adopted a constitution, by which they are to remain bound *for ever*, till they approve of a variation; I say, for ever, because some government must always exist, and, therefore, that which is already established must *unceasingly* exist till a change occurs; the moment of which, being indefinite, is not, willingly, to be pre-supposed. If a nation, indeed, appoints express periods for the revision of its government, such a provision will then form a part of *its constitution*; but such a provision is not yet a part of *ours*; and, in any event, it is more requisite in the infancy of a constitution, when experience has not had time to furnish its evidence upon the subject, than in its more advanced periods. — In great concerns, indeed, certitude and tranquillity are so preferable to hazard and tumult, and to ameliorate is so much better than to form anew, that we may be cheerfully reconciled to what

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(singular as it may seem) is certainly a part of our own constitution; namely, that a power of making essential changes in it should reside in the *ordinary* legislature; especially of making such changes as relate to the rescinding of its own innovations, or to the carrying into better effect the spirit of the constitution; and especially too in a country, where conventions are so little habitual, as to be likely to cause considerable ferment, should they occur. If the people are properly enlightened and independent, alterations, which are good, will be obtained in this manner, at little risk, and bad ones will easily be prevented, or else be speedily redressed; and where the people are not thus enlightened and independent, they are scarcely fit for appearing in a convention. — Can any man of judgment, or of feeling, indeed, be fond of encouraging *revolutions*; by which a nation is tossed off its base into the air, without its being certain which side will be left uppermost when it falls back again? Is the mere call of a theorist to lead this nation to hazard the *much* which it enjoys in peace, for a small addition, which it can probably only obtain by blood, even if it obtains it at all, but which it may shed its blood without obtaining? The dog, who dropped the substance to bite at the shadow, experienced only the *loss* of that substance; but a nation, in the situation here painted, might not only experience temporary loss, but dreadful *injury*.



What is the attempt at a revolution? — Is it not a state-battle, in which, should the people be conquered, the conqueror will act upon the system of conquest; is it not an inter-regnum, even in case of their being superior, in which they may afterwards have to struggle with the villainy or ignorance of their own chiefs and supporters; and is it not a moment, in which foreigners may intrude themselves as enemies into their government, or as rivals into their concerns; in which the minds of men may become embittered, families be divided, friends spill the blood or plot the ruin of friends, and private duties of all sorts be found in contention with public ones; trade also stagnate, credit vanish, and perhaps the fields be untilled, and the industry, morals, and humanity, of the people, too naturally, become impaired? — If it is a case in which there is *much* change called for, an oppressed people may, indeed, shew zeal, but will probably want temper and instruction; and if there is *little* required to be done, why call in a tempest to effect it? If the parties mean the blessing for their *own* day, alas, it may be dearly bought; and, if for posterity, it will be equally in time for them, if it can be effected through the channel of a mild and generous reform, which professes to retain all which is good, and to remove only what is bad; which assumes instantly what is practicable, and prepares the way for what is difficult; and which, by a just or indulgent provision for the incumbent, facilitates a more happy,

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as well as a more certain, termination of every abuse. — Should the present struggle, for example, on the side of France, issue prosperously, will not its war, and have not indeed its mere armaments, against its external and internal enemies, cost more than its plunder has produced to it; and if its struggle ultimately fails, will not France have lost all, merely from wanting sense and moderation? — In arbitrary governments, such as was that of France, under its monarchy, or in despotic governments, like that of Turkey, attempts at Revolutions may often be plausible; and, when plausible, will be justifiable; because the provocation is always sufficient, and things can hardly be made worse, by an attempt failing. But in a country like England, which has a *quiet* means of reform open to it, and which, if it could accomplish a Revolution, would have little to gain, because it has comparatively little to alter; and because that little must be effected with wisdom and with lenity; I say, in England, the attempt at a Revolution, unless under very extraordinary circumstances, and with a view to *preserve*, rather than to improve, would be madness; and the proposition to that effect deserving of every degree of reprobation and horror. — But, were it otherwise, Revolutions do not require to be *preached*; for, when they are practicable, the people will shew, in a manner too marked to be mistaken, whether they are ripe or not for joining in them; and the measures of the times, in this respect, will, of themselves,

be *up to the times*. — To aim, therefore, at Revolutions, either needlessly or prematurely, is an act of high imprudence, and even of injustice; for, though friendly to free discussions, and convinced of the fair meaning of many of Mr. Paine's admirers; yet I must affirm, that certain parts of his writings have done great immediate mischief to the cause of Liberty and to its supporters, from having occasioned a postponement of the great work of reform, as well as great unhappiness to many individuals. — In short, one of the most potent motives for a *reform* is, that it may extinguish that leaven, which at one period or another may generate a *Revolution*; a remedy too desperate ever to be applied, except when the disease is still more desperate than itself; that is, only when real slavery oppresses or threatens. The love of change is an embarrassing passion, often fatal to its possessors; and as there are few good changes, which are not gradual, "the fearless great resolve" ought to be left to the romance of the poets, and to be replaced by that better quality, so happily marked by the name of "an intrepid moderation;" which, while with firmness it chooses a line of caution, with equal firmness executes whatever it has determined.

But, in saying this, I cannot be deemed to vindicate that sort of persecution, which has occurred, on this occasion, against popular characters, popular bodies, and popular principles. It will be found a great mistake, if slander is held equal to the work  
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of reason ; and if railing at an echo is adopted as the means of silencing it ; for, these things may chance to be rendered back with interest, should occasions change. — At present, apparent prosperity and the absence of all suspicion have tranquillized the public on the subject of politics ; and, while things retain such an aspect, men may forget the inquiry, whether they have *any fixed political security for the continuance of it* ; but let room once be given, either for uneasiness or for jealousy, and it will then soon appear, whether the mind of man, in this country, has not abandoned many prejudices, and made a progress, which will call for strong grounds of satisfaction, before things can be calmed again. — Foolish, then, are those, who place their safety on the mere temporary posture of events, and who feel themselves secure when these are prosperous : for, prudence requires such a stability to be aimed at in every situation, as even *adverse* circumstances shall not injure. And, for this purpose, those, who are afraid of the progress of popular opinions, have two measures before them, which are perfectly obvious, and both of which, at present, are completely in their power. — The one is, to compound with the public for the surrender of whatever the public is likely, permanently, to object to, while (if I may use the phrase with decency) *a good market for it offers*. Thus, rotten boroughs and tithes might now be sure of receiving ample commutation, in consequence of the easy temper  
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and wealth of the public: and the bargain, to the public, would be cheap at any price; for, what is money to a nation, which could spend a hundred millions, in acknowledged modes, in the American war; and as much more in unaccounted modes, or in gains and prosperity, which were foregone, during, or in consequence of, that war? And, as to the Crown, who is it that would not joyfully add to its splendor and means of gratification, if we were allowed, in return, to abate its influence? and having, at the same time, given a certain degree of independence to the Legislature, the farther progress of the executive power would no longer serve for alarm. — The second measure is, to educate the poor, on whom no other religious principle is seriously inculcated, with a *political* view, than bigotry; or, in other words, than that of hating their neighbour; and to whom no other mode of carrying their political *wishes* into effect is pointed out, than that of violence. Violence has a double edge, which the doctrine of passive obedience will not, upon trying occasions, be able to blunt; and no one can tell who it is, five years hence, that will have to wield this formidable weapon. — If political objections are thus removed on one side, and if the manners of the populace are softened on the other, no popular writer will be able to disturb our internal peace; liberty will no longer seek to build its temple upon the sands of democracy; nor ambition pursue that deep game, of *all or nothing*.

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What I have said on the subject of nations governing themselves has thus, I trust, been sufficiently guarded, as far as respects the *British* nation; — but I still desire to have my doctrines accepted in their full force, as far as they respect the revolutions of *France* and of *Poland*, with a view to which alone I first introduced them.

It now remains to speak of Mr. Burke.

I design neither to praise nor to censure Mr. Burke, my concern being with his theories. Having endeavoured to overthrow his anti-revolutionary system, I shall here seek to dissipate the very materials of his edifice. Surrounded as it is by a thicket of metaphysics, it is difficult to find an approach to it; but in this, however, lies our only difficulty. To remove that difficulty, I shall translate his metaphysics into plainer language. Where eloquence furnishes the glass, through which we are to view an object, however hideous and deformed that object may be in its native characters, it is easy, by this means, to disguise its outlines, and to decorate every part of it, with false prismatic colours; and the only remedy consists, in withdrawing, from before the eye, the deceitful medium, and trusting to day-light and our senses. — It is thus that we shall proceed with Mr. Burke; rendering the subject as little abstruse, as its nature and his mode of treating it will admit. But I must premise that I shall answer no more of Mr. Burke,  
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than can be considered as adverse to my own propositions.

To alter a constitution once settled upon compact, whether tacit or express, without the consent of all the parties, says Mr. Burke, is to break that compact.—But may not a compact be *obligatory during its existence*, and yet, at the same time, be *dissoluble for urgent reasons*. For example, if I apply to a physician to take charge of my health, under a general engagement on my side to conform to his prescriptions; does it follow, that I can never change this physician for negligence; or, does the contract imply, even while we remain together, that I must never decline his prescriptions, when notoriously injurious, of which the patient, surely, is but too feeling a judge?

But our author goes farther: for, he says, that, though civil society might be at first a *voluntary* act, it is continued down, under a permanent covenant, attaching upon every new individual, without any *formal act of his own*. His proof of this is, that men come into the community partaking conjointly of its benefits and of its duties; and that, duty being always compulsive, *duty* and *will* are contradictory terms; (the compulsion arising, he says, from the relations of man to man, and of man to God, which are plainly *not matters of choice*.)—Thus, then, we have our author's system extended against us not only for life, but even from generation to generation; and thence, to go back to our illustration,

illustration, we are to conclude, that children must submit, through endless time, to the medical government of some certain persons, merely because these happen to be descended from their father's physician. — But, let us observe here, as being curious in Mr. Burke's reasoning, that mention is made only of the duty attaching to *one* party in the political compact, namely, the people; notwithstanding political governors have, at least, as much duty to fulfil as the people. If these governors, when they commit excessive wrongs, should be thought, for cogent reasons, to be *inviolable*; yet, surely, it does not follow, that they are never to be *removeable*; or that their high and important duties are to be left without any corresponding sanction for enforcing them; (especially as a part of the crime of the government may have consisted, in depriving the people of the means of fulfilling its portion of the compact.) — But, in the next place, what becomes of Mr. Burke's hypothesis, in cases where there has been no compact, and where the constitution is neither wise nor just, or else has been perverted, or, lastly, has failed in obtaining the general approbation? Where is its obligation under such circumstances? Is there any thing in a nation either greater or more important than the whole nation itself? And shall the nation bow down before an idol, which is *not* of its own making. — Should any one here proceed in error still farther than Mr. Burke, and affirm, that compact and  
justice



justice are wholly out of the question, and that government belongs only to the strongest; this is to put the matter at issue upon the question of *force*; and mankind have solely to consult their prudence, as to the *time* of reviving this contest, in all cases where the government, which is imposed, is bad. — I shall not particularly reply, in this place, to what Mr. Burke says of the true basis of government, its benefits, or its duties; having already discussed these questions. But I think it necessary to add, that when, instead of *benefits*, a government shall have inflicted *curses*, a nation seems then to be permitted, by the tenor of this part of Mr. Burke's own hypothesis, to institute a better government; and, when instituted, it will, I hope, under every hypothesis, be held a duty to hand it *unimpaired* to posterity; a duty, which we find from history, has been acknowledged by all nations in critical circumstances. — As to Mr. Burke's grave appeal to the duty owing "from man to man, and from all men "to God," it is clear that this appeal takes the whole of this discussion *for granted*; and that, if these duties are proved to operate on *my* side of question, instead of Mr. Burke's, I shall myself be entitled, by virtue of his own reasonings, to the benefit of such appeal, in favour of my own positions.

The next position of Mr. Burke, I confess, surprises me. — Wishing to deny, that the basis of government depends upon the *majority*, he says, that

a people being but a corporation, when they break the compact which gives them a corporate form, they are no longer a *people*; and that, among disbanded men, no *majority* can operate, since one man cannot bind *another*. — It is singular, that a person, who thus calls for *unanimity* in a state of nature, should make numbers pass for so little in a state of society. But he forgets, that this disbanded body cannot become more disbanded than it was *previous* to the present state of society; and that it is difficult to prove, that the dissolved compact was itself originally formed, in consequence of any *unanimity*. — As to majorities, the necessity of resorting to them arises from the moral impossibility of obtaining a frequent unanimity; so that, if the society has to decide upon various questions, a decision cannot be had, without the means of decision are given, namely, the voice of a majority; which majority may, at pleasure, fix its *own quantum* in all subsequent questions.

But Mr. Burke, who will not allow of majorities, nevertheless allows of casts and privileged characters, under the name of a *natural* aristocracy; in great multitudes of whom, acting together, he recognizes the *people*; without whom, (that is, without which portion of the people,) he apparently admits neither influence nor contravention to exist, on the part of the public, in matters of government; (even if he admits it then.) — I must here observe, that Mr. Burke's natural aristocracy

aristocracy wholly excludes that class of men, who, without being able to take part in public affairs themselves, yet can appreciate characters sufficiently well, to appoint representatives to act for them, as well as excludes a part of those who can judge for themselves; and this I consider as a sufficient answer to his hypothesis on this subject.

Here then for a while, quitting this writer, let me revert to that momentous question, whether the natural rights of man (as they are called) are at any time to stand compromised and affected by incidental circumstances? — I answer boldly, that they are; for, first, large and extensive concerns, in proportion to their magnitude, have a claim to be separated from more general rules, and are to be considered as distinct cases, and to be decided upon as such according to their own bearings and operations; and, in the next place, I take the first *right of man* to be, *that of being as happy as possible, consistently with the same right in other men* (every other right being subordinate to this leading right, and serving only as a *means* to this end). In the vast system of society, therefore, if it should happen, that a large description of men should be found below that temperament, either of virtue or of knowledge, which is necessary to enable them to assist, either directly or indirectly, in judging of the general welfare; the happiness  
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of the whole will require (as is shewn in my letters) the exclusion of such portion from all interference in politics, (at least unless in particular cases;) an exclusion, which, though it is much to be lamented, and as soon as possible to be terminated, yet is, with respect to all good purposes, only nominal; since the *exercise* of the faculty of judging is only denied to those who really are destitute of the faculty itself. — In a state of nature, then, and preparatory to forming a convention, men may be ranged into three classes, with respect to politics; namely, those who can judge for themselves, those who can find others to judge for them, and those who can do neither properly. Delegation (which is necessary both upon a *mechanical* principle for numerous bodies, and also to impart, in the present instance, the means of action to the middle class) mixes the first and second class into one, and thus secures the co-operation of the greatest possible portion of the society. I see no other procedure than this to be pursued in those states, which pretend to the freest systems of representation; and in all other states, great as is the blessing of a free representation, it ought at first, like light and food to men who have been famished in dungeons, to be charily administered. — Thus we see that our chief and prominent political right is, that we should be happy; that education is a great instrument in forming our characters; that the desideratum of all societies

ought to be, to impart rights and blessings to the greatest number; that acting by delegation and by majorities, are necessary mechanical expedients; and that since a *minority* must exist in all societies, instead of attempting to lessen the numbers of it *by persecution*, the case of this minority ought to be consulted by every indulgence, as the best consolation for the necessity of subjecting it to general laws. Shall a disciple of Mr. Burke, after allowing the original insufficiency of one man to bind another by the means of the voice of a *majority*, contend for the competence of one primary vote of unanimity, given only by hypothesis, confirmed only by mere majorities since the flood by a like hypothesis, passed perhaps with the crudeness or violence of a French decree, and in any event incroached upon by such numberless innovations, that, contrary to the ship of Delos, it does not even admit a scholastic question, whether its identity and continuity is not long since utterly vanished; I say, shall a disciple of Mr. Burke (even should his master refuse this boon of justice) view with any other sentiment than that of tenderness all modern aberrations from unanimity, whether in church or state, and contend that governments ought to be conducted upon a principle of exclusion, rather than that of comprehension?—So much, then, must suffice for general notions on the subject of revolutions, as far as those of Mr. Burke and myself stand in contradiction;

diction; (referring to Mr. Burke's *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, as his latest exhibition of his own.)

In speaking of Mr. Burke's noted phrase of the "*swinish multitude*," used in a former publication, it is with reluctance I observe, that a disdain of the poor is generally accompanied with a disposition to applaud the great. But if the poor are really of the description of swine, the spell of the enchantress Circe, which has been potent enough to effect it, I say, this spell consists only of ignorance and vice; and the sole mode of removing their bestiality, and to make them fit companions again for the too contemptuous Ulysses, is to communicate to them knowledge and virtue. The poor, lured by specious pretexts and promises, have been deceived into their present odious situation.

On thrones around, with downy coverings grac'd,  
 With *semblance fair*, th' unhappy men she plac'd.  
 But venom'd was the bread and mix'd the bowl,  
 With drugs of force to *darken* all the soul:  
 Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost,  
 And drank oblivion of their native coast.  
*Instant*, her circling wand the goddess waves,  
 To hogs transforms them, — and the sty receives.  
 No more was seen the human form divine;  
 Head, face, and members, bristle into swine:  
 Still curst with sense, their *minds* remain alone,  
 And their own voice affrights them when they groan.  
 Meanwhile the goddess, in disdain, bestows  
 The mast and acorn, (*brutal food!*) and strows

The fruits of cornel, as their feast, around.

— Think'st thou by wit to model their escape?

Sooner shalt thou, a stranger to thy shape,

Fall prone, their equal. First, thy danger know;

Then, take the antidote the gods bestow;

And, hastening to the flies, set wide the door,

Urge forth and drive the bristly herd before.

— Unweildy, out they rush with general cry

Enormous beasts, dishonest to the eye.

Now touch'd with counter-charms, they change again,

And stand *majestic*, and recall'd to *men*.

Those hairs, of late that bristled every part,

Fall off, miraculous effect of art!

Till all the form in full proportion rise,

More young, more large, more graceful to our eyes.

For myself, (who *nihil humanum a me alienum puto*,) I agree with Rousseau, that, if *men* are bad, *man* himself is good; or at least, which is the sense in which I accept the position, capable of being rendered so by education and care. It is indeed a sort of begging of the principle, first to neglect the poor, and then to say, that they are too bad either for trust or for enjoyment; and that therefore we must not throw our pearls before them. But the poet tells us, that this is the natural progress of the passions: *odi profanum vulgus, et arceo*. — In contemplating, however, the *broad pyramid*, which (according to every one) represents society in its actual state, I conceive, that those, who form the lower portions of it, may, in consequence of the power of *knowledge* to direct, of *mechanics* to aid, of *economy* to spare,

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and of *peace* to protect; I conceive, I say, that the poor may easily have their labours lessened, their comforts increased, and their gratifications extended, without either loss, risk, or inconvenience, to the opulent; and the more so, in proportion to their education. Is it not a general scandal, that the chief consolation of the poor, in most countries, is liquor; and that nothing is thought so dreadful, as to let them retain any time at their command; though, when men are rendered innocent by education, what can be a more obvious or cheap indulgence to them, than *leisure*? — Oh! history, unfold thy pages, reddened with blood and blackened with crimes, and tell us, why it is, that our rulers *waste* the labour of man by wars, and neglect his education! Is it because, if they improved mankind, they must improve themselves? — After all that we have suffered, on account of their ambition, are they yet, then, to learn; first, how little wars add to their felicity; and, next, that we, their subjects, are always too happy, when they pursue merely a *negative* conduct.

I say this, fearless of misrepresentation; for my letters prove, that I am no enemy to kings, who are formed to give great consistence to an old government, in consequence of having a deep stake in it; and who, by pre-occupying the post of ambition, serve to quiet the attempts of all pretenders; for, as to the expence of kings, it is to be held as nothing to a great state, and especially if

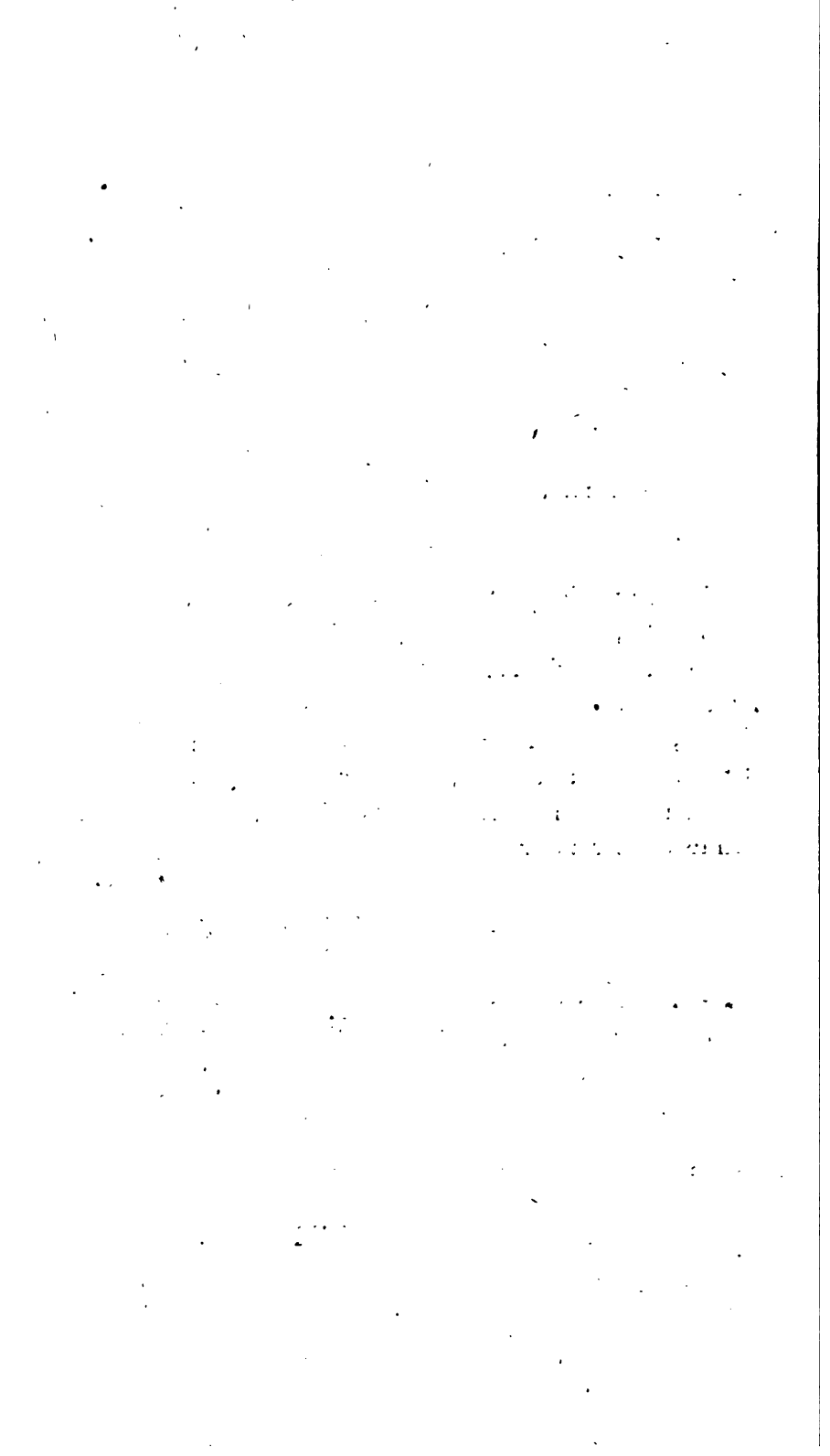


it is the price of tranquillity. — Our own constitution has many excellencies. I am not critical to learn its origin, any more than is the Egyptian to trace back the Nile to its source, as long as it fertilizes his fields. I find limited monarchy established; and I confirm it (as I have a right to do) by my assent; convinced, that it only requires to be practised upon its own principles to make us happy. And, when we look through Europe, it must certainly seem a peculiar blessing and pride to us, that a man can rise up in our senate, and warn the prince whenever he is doing wrong; and thus fearlessly embody and give voice to the public opinion. — If a reform shall take place in parliament, its votes will tell the same to the prince, still more efficaciously; which may make reform seem terrible to a courtier. But let those, who possess these timid sentiments, consult the tenor of our experience, and they will find (as of late) that whenever the people possess ease, and think they have sufficient security for its continuance, they grow careless in matters of government; and if wars shall be avoided in future, as the people will thence grow richer, they will thence again become more indifferent about their taxes. — Let a reform then anticipate their wishes; that those, who have to grant it, may *themselves* adjust its manner and its measure. — But if it is to stand adjourned to trying times, (and who can be the warrant for futurity,) and, if the public shall have to prescribe, the

the whole, the changes, whenever they occur, may then become extensive and harsh. — But it is not in this view only that reform is necessary to our security, but in another ; for, what has most contributed to give or to preserve our freedom is, first, our insular situation, which has superseded the use of a standing army, and at the same time has favoured trade and independent fortunes in the middling ranks; and, next, the circumstance of our possessing a family upon the throne, which, till of late years, has found it necessary, for its *own* safety, to maintain revolutionary principles. I need not apply this remark ; for, when the state of public affairs is duly considered by wise and good men, they will be more and more convinced, that nothing is more advisable, than a sensible and anticipated reform : But, alas ! who dares indulge himself in the prospect of it, when it is so commonly the nature of man to wait for a death-bed repentance ?

*A CALM OBSERVER.\**

\* In the first edition, a Postscript followed in this place, which is now inserted before the Appendix.



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L E T T E R S  
ON THE  
CONCERT OF PRINCES, &c.

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*On the Abandonment of Poland by Prussia.—Published  
July 20, 1792.*

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*To the PRINTER of the MORNING CHRONICLE.*

S I R,

**I**T gave me pleasure and pain intermixed, to see the treaty of alliance, and the correspondence between the Kings of Prussia and Poland, inserted in your paper of the 12th instant. The dereliction of Poland is both a disgrace and an affliction to human nature ; but, when Princes abandon their engagements, they deserve every exposure.

The motives of Prussia, with respect to Poland, have been too clear to be misinterpreted. While she was jealous of the progress of Austria and Russia against the Turks, or while she hoped for the  
voluntary

voluntary cession of Dantzic and Thorn from Poland, Poland was to be supported; but when the fear of Austria and Russia subsided, and Poland refused to commit suicide, the most solemn treaties have become annulled, and Poland must expiate its guilt by a second dismemberment.

Perhaps history does not furnish a greater instance of political delusion than is at present exhibited by Prussia. — Russia has already five times as many inhabitants, and Austria above three times as many, as Prussia; and each of these powers either possesses, or is likely to acquire, new tracts of territory, sufficient to enable them to double their present numbers, besides a prospect of enjoying considerable increased advantages as to trade, navigation, and wealth. — On the other hand, as the resources of Prussia, both present and future, are peculiarly limited both as to extent and position, the loss of the *barrier*, formed by Poland against these formidable powers, cannot be compensated by any temporary acquisition of *booty*; since one-third of the Polish spoils, in the hands of Prussia, can be no equipoise to two-thirds of them in the hands of these rivals, if they act in concert.

As to the permanent feelings of Austria, they are easily divined; for, if she is eager, at this distant era, to snatch back Lorraine, Alsace, &c. from France; there will be still less doubt, from this example, of her inclinations to recover Silesia, torn from her more recently by a smaller power, nearer home;

home; inclinations which will survive all temporary accommodations made for interested purposes. — But Austria is liable to still more extensive and dangerous passions, founded upon the influence of names, and the pride of all persons not to be inferior to those who have gone before them in the same career. The geographic name of Germany, and the title of Emperor, will perpetually excite a recollection of the power of the *Western* Emperors of Rome; and lead to wishes which will include Prussia, Holland, Holstein, Switzerland, and Savoy, as their immediate object; and finally extend to Italy, in order to render the whole of that rich peninsula a family-possession to the House of Austria. — The plunder of Turkey and Persia, and the well-known anxiety of Russia to have a *Greek* empire, (as well as a Greek church,) will, for a time, naturally dispose Russia to keep well with Austria, as being the strongest and most contiguous power. — But, without any certainty of such an union between these powers, it is sufficient to affirm that there is a *danger* of it; and that, if once it takes place, it must naturally be at the expence of Prussia, whose upstart name not only disfigures the map of Germany, but whose troublesome pretensions, and whose restless jealousies (the latter of which are the certain companions of its weakness) at present require that Austria and Russia should divide the plunder of that quarter of the world, which

which by its situation seems so peculiarly their own, into *three* shares, instead of *two*.

What faith is it that Prussia, in this case, will have to place in the engagements of her rivals? — Is it by her own conduct to Poland and to Saxony, that she hopes to render a system of truth and honour respected? Or does her own versatility, who, from having been yesterday the enemy of Austria and Russia, is now become their associate, inspire her with confidence? Or, is it, again, from the example of Sweden towards France and Turkey, or from that of Holland towards England and France, or from that of Russia towards Turkey, or from the little veneration of the French emigrants for their civic oath, or from any other events in history, that Prussia learns that there is any safety in politics, besides that of not placing herself in the power of others? — Prussia thinks that she has acted with much address in producing the war between Austria and France, of which, however, at present, she seems likely to bear nearly an equal share. But, alas! Austria will only pursue this war, while she thinks to gain by it, and will endeavour to be the first, if necessary, in making a treaty of alliance with France; and will make her success in doing this an atonement for having engaged in a vain and foolish enterprize. And, in the mean time, if the fleeting system of the Concert of Princes in general ends in a permanent concert between Austria and Russia in particular, it portends a speedy extinction

tion of Prussia. — The cause of the Concert of Princes, it is to be remarked, was not merely an attachment in Austria to the Royal Family of France, but her persuasion that her alliance with France depended on the continuance of this family in power. The operation of this concert was, indeed, suspended on the restoration of the French King to liberty; but Leopold having been prevailed upon afterwards to hazard some menaces against the French, it produced in France a discussion and reprobation of the Austrian alliance on the terms established in 1756. From *that moment*, Austria became hostile to the National Assembly; and, therefore, that Assembly well knows on what terms it can restore peace, should a compromise become needful. — Prussia, therefore, is like one of those weak animals in the fable, who were proud of hunting with the lords of the forest, but who, when the game was taken, soon discovered the nature of the lion's share. — Austria and Russia are of a size to be always impregnable, even in spite of bad government: but bounded and artificial states, like Prussia, can only be secure, when there are many other states jealous of the larger ones, with which it can ally itself. A state, whose chief strength depends upon an army, and upon a treasure most ridiculously magnified, only requires a lavish prince, and a foolish choice of generals; or extravagant projects, to overthrow it beyond redemption.

But



But to return to Poland. It was surely a little unreasonable in Prussia to expect Poland to renounce its chief access to the sea, and put its chief imports and exports into its power, without any compensation.

That it is unjust to invade the rights of the Nation and the King of Poland, is self-evident. States are families, and one family must not wantonly interfere with another. — If Poland had been an orderly country, reduced by its revolution to anarchy; if her King had rendered himself a despot, or had even been odious or weak, some colour might have been preserved. But when a kingdom, known to a proverb for its bad government and distractions, unites for the purpose of adopting a government applauded by Europe, through the medium of a revolution the best digested and conducted of any known in history; and when a King, allowed by the Prussian Minister to be "*virtuous*," provides himself a successor (not out of his own, but out of another, family) whom the Prussian Monarch proclaims to be alike "*virtuous, as well as destined to form the happiness of Poland*;" when, I say, under these circumstances, Prussia combines against Poland, in order again to profit by its spoils, we see a conduct more revolting than any which Prussia can attribute to the Jacobins of France, against whom its arms are now pretended to be directed.

But

But Prussia acts not only against her interest, and against justice, but against her peremptory engagements. Look at the sixth Article of the *recent* Treaty with Poland. It will there appear that an opposition to foreign interference, in the internal affairs of Poland, is distinctly undertaken by Prussia, with a view to Russia; and that this article of the Treaty is so peculiarly fitted to the predicament of Poland singly, that it is not even thought of being made *reciprocal* in favour of Prussia. — And, what is the pretext for abandoning this Treaty? It is, that the *Empress of Russia has shewn a decided opposition to the order of things established in Poland, on the 3d of May, 1791, and is provoked by Poland presuming to put herself into a posture to defend it.* — It will be seen, however, by the annexed documents, that nothing was effected on the 3d of May, 1791, to which Prussia had not previously assented, and which she did not afterwards sanction; and that Prussia, according to the assertion of her own King, did not intimate a single doubt respecting the Revolution, till one month (and according to the Prussian Minister, till six months) after it had taken place; in short, to use the Monarch's own words, as fully explanatory of his double politics, “not till the *general tranquillity of Europe* permitted him to explain himself.” — Instead, therefore, of assisting Poland, Prussia insultingly recommends to Poland to retrace her steps; in which case, she *says*, that she will be ready to *attempt an accommodation in*  
her

her favour. — Is it thus, then, that treaties and the happiness of nations are sported with? Has not Poland already done service under this very treaty, by omitting to seek an alliance with Russia and Austria, and by attaching herself to Prussia, when Prussia wanted every weight to help her to save the Turks? Has Prussia done any permanent counter-service? On the contrary, is not the whole of the war, between Poland and Russia, with all its consequences, to be placed to her account? — Was there any article in the treaty to prevent Poland changing her Constitution; or any article to limit the aid of Prussia to the late precise form of that constitution? On the contrary, is not the protection of Poland from foreign interference in her internal affairs an avowed *casus fœderis*; being the subject of one entire article of the treaty, rendered still stronger, by the covenant being *wholly* confined to the benefit of Poland? How strange would be the doctrine, that, because one nation forms an alliance with another, is it not, therefore, *sui juris* in its own concerns; especially when it is at the same time universally admitted, that the contracting parties may form subsequent alliances with *other foreign powers*, which, in the event, may more or less militate with the prior engagements?

It is natural to suppose, that the conduct of *Prussia* has been in part instigated by the fear of Poland resuming, at a future period, the territory lost at its  
*first*

*first* spoliation. — But Poland was capable of entering into a generous compromise, as to this object, as far as respected Prussia; the observance of which, the position of Prussia insured, in consequence of its intersecting the communication between Saxony and Poland; and, it is to be remarked, in general, that this position must always have secured weight to Prussia in the affairs of Europe, as long as Poland and Saxony had remained connected. Besides, it is clear, that Prussia, by a treaty with Poland and Saxony, on the one side, and by the aid of the Germanic league, and also of a treaty with France and Denmark, joined to her old allies in Great Britain and Holland, on the other, might have given permanent tranquillity to Europe, and a peculiar stability to her own systems. — Instead of it, she has plunged herself into a wide scene of dangers, in the idle hope that Austria does not comprehend her little politics, and will not be able with prudence to save herself the *soonest*, should occasion require it.

But, passing by Prussia, let us consider a little the proceedings on the part of *Russia*. However favourable may be the light in which I would wish to place the ascent of the Empress to the Russian throne, to the prejudice of her husband and her son, yet it is impossible that she can urge (as a foreigner) any legitimate foundation for it, except the consent of the Russian nation. Will it not then, towards her, be a sufficient justification of the Polish  
E constitution,

constitution, that it was first voted, and is since adored, by the Polish nation; and that not only its *King* proposed it, but that there is in Poland no *hereditary* successor to the throne, as in France, who can offer any objections to it. — If foreign applause, on which the Empress herself has greatly rested, is requisite to ratify it, what civilized nation, what party, what author, I had almost said, what Prince, throughout Europe, has not felt for it a sincere admiration, and does not follow it with secret prayers? With Englishmen and Foreigners, in general, I will venture to affirm, that there is not *one* exception to this; unless among persons interested in the league formed for its destruction. — “ And, “ will *you* then, great Catharine, you, who already “ possess far more of the globe than any other “ power upon the face of it; will you spoil this fair “ work of human hands? will you, a lover of “ science, replunge a large district of the earth into “ the cruel barbarism, in which it has been held, “ by means of its government, for centuries, not “ omitting the period when you presided over it? “ and will you frustrate that *independence*, which “ may save Poland from falling into the hands of an “ enemy in future times? — Your power is certain; “ but despotism and injustice, whatever may be the “ fate of democratic principles, cannot now obtain “ the esteem or the praise of an European public. “ Your guarantee of the former Polish Constitution “ can only serve as a reason for preventing the pre-  
“ sent

“ sent constitution from being changed for a *worse*,  
 “ and not against the introduction of a *better* in its  
 “ place. — Be known then by the good you do,  
 “ and not by the evil: seek for the blessings of man-  
 “ kind, and not for their curses. It is easy for the  
 “ strong to add to their strength; but it is not given  
 “ to every one to shew magnanimous forbearance.  
 “ Besides, the term of nature (to which, alas! you  
 “ know the proudest of us must submit) does not  
 “ promise you many years longer for a rule in  
 “ human affairs; and you are in a great measure  
 “ ignorant of the characters of those who are to  
 “ come, after you, to conduct your various systems  
 “ and dominions: perhaps too these may be usurpers,  
 “ instead of your own issue. — But, if your plans of  
 “ *conquest* are irrevocable, at least insure to Poland a  
 “ *good government*. In an age, when it is said that  
 “ Princes are to be supported, if the King of *Pol-  
 “ land only* is oppressed, it will be thought that he  
 “ found no favour from his fellow-sovereigns, only  
 “ because he was supposed the most amiable among  
 “ them. — Time, on account of this Prince’s age,  
 “ must soon remove him in order to make way for  
 “ a successor, who, by the Polish laws, must be  
 “ found out of his family. Let the Polish govern-  
 “ ment then remain, as now projected, even if  
 “ you seek to change the intended line of descent  
 “ of the crown\*. — The alterations of the consti-

\* It was by some suspected, at this time, that the Empress  
 designed to obtain the reversion of the crown of Poland for one  
 of her family.

"tution are of such a happy nature, being at once  
 "favourable to the nation and to its Prince, that  
 "the King of Poland has performed herein an ac-  
 "ceptable service for *every Sovereign* who shall suc-  
 "ceed him in that country. — Be the restorer, then,  
 "of kingdoms, but not their confounder. — Let  
 "the stigma of your late manifesto be wiped away  
 "as speedily as possible from the memory of the  
 "public, where the shock it has given to your re-  
 "putation is beyond your means of comprehending  
 "it, because none can possibly dare to tell it to you.  
 "— Be assured, great Princess, that, while the ap-  
 "plause of men is worth receiving, it is necessary  
 "that they should be *civilized*; and, when they are  
 "civilized, it is impossible, whatever they may write  
 "or say in public, that they can ever *think* or *say*  
 "in private, that Princes are not bound to promote  
 "the happiness of our race in unison with their own.  
 "I will go farther, and affirm, that Princes will  
 "always in reality be deemed secondary characters,  
 "and that nations will always be held the principals;  
 "and that those Sovereigns, who cannot, upon oc-  
 "casion, personally sacrifice themselves to the people  
 "depending upon them, or, for their sakes, restrain  
 "a weak ambition within proper bounds, are wholly  
 "unworthy of their stations. As the power of  
 "Princes cannot survive the grave, the mighty  
 "Monarch, when dead, leaves behind him a re-  
 "public in the living; the page of history becomes  
 "his tribunal; there are none so humble, as not to  
 "find

“ find defenders at it; and a single sentence founded  
 “ in truth, in the present enlightened times, is  
 “ sufficient to lay prostrate the proudest character,  
 “ if really unworthy of fame. The reason is evi-  
 “ dent — it is, that men are impartial to the dead,  
 “ who excite neither their fears nor their hopes.  
 “ Hence it is that the venal pen is found insufficient  
 “ to protect even the fame of Peter the Great,  
 “ as he is called, though enshrined by Voltaire;  
 “ the world having *lately* become instructed as to his  
 “ manners, before concealed from them by the  
 “ obscurity in which Russia and its concerns so  
 “ long lay buried.”

As to *Austria*, who has forfeited no particular  
 faith upon this occasion, I shall no farther observe  
 upon her conduct, than to notice how little *family-*  
 connection, among Princes, is to be depended upon,  
 when the Saxon family is slighted by Austria: and,  
 as to the small respect of Princes for *personal* worth,  
 it is alike seen in the little deference shewn both to  
 the Saxon Elector and the Polish Monarch upon  
 this occasion. — In what have the Jacobins of  
 France done worse, than the Triumvirate to which  
 Poland and Saxony are sacrificed? Does not every  
 thing seem to prove, that, whether absolute power  
 is in the hands of one, of three, or of many, it is  
 sure to be abused?



In another letter I shall speak of the *Concert of Princes*, and its consequences, particularly on account of the growing power of Austria and Russia. In the mean time, the following pieces will amply confirm the assertions here made respecting Prussia.

July 16, 1792.

A CALM OBSERVER.

*Documents referred to in the preceding Letter.*

ARTICLE VI. OF THE TREATY OF DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE BETWEEN HIS MAJESTY THE KING AND THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND AND HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF PRUSSIA, DATED MARCH 29, 1790.

If any foreign power whatever shall, by virtue of any preceding acts or stipulations, or any interpretation of them, assume the right of interfering in the internal affairs of the Republic of *Poland*, or its dependencies, at any time, or in any manner; his Majesty, the King of *Prussia*, will first employ his most efficacious good offices to prevent hostilities arising out of such a pretension; — but if all his good offices should fail of effect, and hostilities against *Poland* should be the consequence, his Majesty, the King of Prussia, considering *this* as a  
case

case falling within the meaning of the alliance, will assist the Republic according to the tenour of the IVth Article of the present treaty.

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COPY OF A LETTER OF THE MARQUIS OF LUCCHESINI, THE PRUSSIAN MINISTER AT WARSAW, TO THE ABBÉ P. DATED 26TH MAY, 1792.

SIR,

I am very thankful for the care you have taken to procure me a translation of the Speech of the King of Poland. I knew that it respected Prussia and its alliance. The sentiments of his Polish Majesty have since been announced to me officially, in writing, by Count Chreptowicz. After the steps I took on the 4th of May last, and the following days, which were also official, as well as consistent, with our declarations for *six months* past, I expected (for why should I conceal it, my dear Abbé?) a *turn* less opposed to the principles which we have announced to the Diet, respecting the consequences of the Revolution of the 3d of May, 1791.

As to the *work* which you attribute to me, I assure you that *that* would not have occasioned a war to Poland. — With respect to every thing besides, which the Court of Berlin learned only in common with strangers and enemies, it was easy to foresee the embarrassments and dangers to which it would expose the Polish nation. On this point, I have never had but one opinion, which I have never concealed from my friends. Faithful to my principles, I will never omit any thing respecting other

objects which may be beneficial to a courageous nation and a *virtuous* King.

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EXTRACTS FROM THE ANSWER TO THE ABOVE  
LETTER, DATED 28TH MAY, 1792, BY THE  
ABBE' P.

The territory of Poland is violated. A neighbouring power comes in arms to disturb the operations of our Diet. This is the case provided for in the 6th Article in the Treaty. — This is virtually what the note of Count Chreptowicz tells you; and whatever *turn* might have been given to it, it could in substance have told you nothing else. There is then nothing opposed to the principles which you have recently renounced; for, you have never said to us, your Ally, that our frontiers would be attacked; and that you, our powerful friend, would see it with indifference, or feel dispensed from your engagements. — As to what I call *your work*, and which Poland is happy in owing to you, it is precisely that which brings the war upon us. The declaration of the Russian Envoy is a proof of this, which cannot be answered. It is there you see *every one* of the resolutions of this Republic, your Ally, since the commencement of the actual Diet, brought as charges against us. — Call to mind the periods, and you will agree, that the Act of the 3d of May, 1791, is but the result of it; or, to speak more correctly, *a combination of the several preceding steps*, in which you may call yourself the great mover: *pars magna fuit*.

The *fundamental articles* of the New Constitution were adopted under *your auspices*; and it was through

through you, that the Court of Berlin testified its approbation, at the close of 1789. The choice of the Elector of Saxony to the throne of Poland, during the life of our present King, (in which all the Palatinates were unanimous,) was alike applauded. The election of dynasties, or families to the throne, was distinctly proposed in the great project of reform laid before the States by the deputation on the 4th of August, 1790, and became the express subject of deliberation. — If the greatness of the undertaking, if the aim of the nation so long frustrated, if political circumstances, suggested the measure of decreeing these articles in an abridged form and reduced to its essential points, it is not the less true, that all this was done upon avowed principles, and by right of our *independence*, which was assuredly your work. — The manner in which the King, your master, condescended, through Mr. Goltz, on the 8th of May, 1791, to answer to our communication of the proceedings of the 3d of May, of that year, was far from expressing, that these proceedings were of a nature at all novel to his Majesty. If you have ever forgot the tenure of that letter, you will find a copy of it annexed.

EXTRACT FROM A DISPATCH FROM THE KING  
OF PRUSSIA TO COUNT GOLTZ, THEN CHARGE  
DES AFFAIRES AT WARSAW, OFFICIALLY COM-  
MUNICATED TO THE POLISH DIET.

I received your dispatch of the 3d of May, 1791, with its accompaniment; and I have learned, by *the last*, the important news, that the Diet of Poland has just chosen and proclaimed the Elector  
of

of Saxony as the eventual successor to the Throne of Poland; and that it has assured the succession to his *descendants*; and, in default of these, to the Princess, his daughter, and such future husband as the Elector of Saxony and the States shall fix upon. — After the lively interest which I have *always* taken in the happiness of the Republic, and the *confirmation* of her *new Constitution* (an interest, of which I have *never ceased* to give such convincing proofs as depended *on me*); I perfectly applaud the *decisive* step which the nation has just taken, and which I regard as *infinitely* suited to the *consolidation* of its happiness. — The news is the more agreeable to me, as I am attached by bonds of friendship to the virtuous Prince, *destined to form the happiness of Poland*, as is also the House of Saxony to my House, by those of good neighbourhood, and of the most happy union. I am thence persuaded, that the choice of the Republic will confirm *for ever* the happy and close *intelligence*, which has subsisted to the *present moment* between the Republic and myself; and I charge you to testify, in the *most expressive manner*, my most sincere solicitations to the *King*, to the Marshals of the Diet, and to *all those* who have contributed to this *great work*.

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LETTER OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA TO THE KING  
OF POLAND.

SIR, MY BROTHER,

I have received, nearly at the same moment, the two letters, by which your Majesty is pleased to make known to me the important resolution just taken, by the confederated Diet of Poland, for fixing

ing the hereditary succession of the throne in favour of the *House of Saxony*. — No one has certainly a better title to communicate to me the particulars of this event, than General Count Potocki, who has acted in it so interesting a part, and who merits, in every respect, the honourable testimony which your Majesty bears in his favour.

The *eagerness* I have shewn to *declare* my sentiments on *this subject* will convince your Majesty, and the whole Polish nation, of the interest I take in this measure. I am happy to have been able to *contribute to the support of the liberty and independence of Poland*, and one of my most pleasing cares shall be to maintain and strengthen the ties which unite us. — I cannot but in particular applaud the choice made of a prince whose virtues render him so worthy of the throne which awaits him. I hope, however, that that moment is still distant, and that your Majesty will, for a long series of years, constitute the happiness of your people. These wishes are not less sincere than is the attachment which I have professed, and with which I shall ever remain,

Sir, my Brother,

Your Majesty's good Brother,

FREDERICK-WILLIAM,

BERLIN, May 23, 1791.

LETTER

LETTER OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA TO THE KING  
OF POLAND.

BERLIN, *June 8, 1792.*

SIR, MY BROTHER,

The Grand Marshal of Lithuania, the Comte de Potocki, has delivered to me your Majesty's letter, dated the 31st of May. I there see with regret the embarrassment in which Poland finds itself now involved. But I will acknowledge, with equal frankness, that, after all that has passed for the last *twelve* months, these embarrassments were to be *foreseen*. Your Majesty will recollect, that, on more than one occasion, the Marquis de Lucchesini was charged to manifest, not only to you, but to the preponderating Members of the Government, my just apprehensions on this subject. — From the moment that *the general re-establishment of tranquillity in Europe permitted me to explain myself*, and that the *Empress of Russia* had shewn a decided opposition to the order of things established on the 3d of May, 1791, my way of thinking and the language of my Ministers have *never varied*; and in observing with a *tranquil* eye the new Constitution, which the Republic has given to itself without my privity or concurrence, I have never had the idea either of supporting or protecting it. I have predicted, on the contrary, that the threatening measures and the warlike preparations, which the Diet unceasingly deliberated upon one after another, would infallibly provoke the resentment of the Empress of Russia, and draw upon Poland the evils which they were undertaken to avoid. — The event fully satisfied those appearances, and one cannot dissemble in the  
present

present moment, that, *without the new form of Government for the Republic, and without the efforts which they have announced for supporting it*, the Court of Russia, would not have determined on the vigorous proceedings she has now embraced.

Whatever be the friendship that I have *sworn* to your Majesty, and the interest I take in every thing that concerns you, you will yourself believe that, the state of things being *entirely changed since the alliance that I contracted* with the Republic, and the present conjuncture, brought on by the Constitution of the 3d of May, 1791, posterior to my treaty, *not being applicable* to the engagements therein stipulated; it does not belong to me to resist the attack made on your Majesty, if the intentions of the patriotic party are still the same, and if they persist in the desire of maintaining their *own* work; — but if, *retracing their steps*, they shall consider the difficulties that are arising upon all sides, I shall be ready to *concert* measures with her Majesty, the Empress of Russia, and to explain myself, at the same time, with the Court of Vienna, to strive to reconcile the different interests, and to agree on measures capable of restoring to Poland its *tranquillity*.

I flatter myself that your Majesty will find, in these dispositions and in these assurances, the sentiments of *sincere friendship, and of the consideration with which I am*

Your Majesty's good Brother,

FREDERICK-WILLIAM.

LETTER



L E T T E R   I I .  
O N   T H E   C O N C E R T   O F   P R I N C E S .

*Published July 25, 1792,*

P A R T   I .

S I R,

ONE of the ablest and best-informed statesmen which this country ever produced, the noble author of the American Peace, deprecated lately in Parliament all support of the "present military combination of Princes," even before we had seen it in overt act. — Having, in a former Letter, in some measure touched upon this subject as it respects Poland, I shall *now* view it as it respects France, Germany, and ourselves, and, ultimately, every thing which can interest the human race; I shall *next* shew, that it is pregnant with mischief, even to the contracting parties themselves; and, *lastly*, speak of the means which remain for opposing it.

The liberties of man, and consequently the progress of science, of civilization, and the arts, have already enough to contend with in every state, viewed *separately*. Whenever the powers invested  
in

in government for useful purposes become abused to ambitious ones, in vain do individuals seek to resist a great collective force instituted by themselves. Despair sometimes produces a counter-union of the subjects, but, as it commonly ends in an alteration of rulers rather than of principles, the evil complained of soon recurs. Hence there are few good governments in the world; so few, that our own nation thinks itself in possession of the only one: and even this has required more than one successful revolution to produce, or to preserve, its perfection. Such, then, is the state of every single country, even when the domestic enemy to its happiness has none, except the forces of his own nation, at his disposal. — But a new scene at the present moment opens itself. Several Princes have mutually agreed to lend to one another the powers respectively intrusted to them for national objects, in order that each may thence be enabled to enforce his respective pleasure upon his respective people. In other words, they engage to bring the military forces and the revenues of *all* nations to act, when requisite, upon the *people* of any *single* nation; although that people has already enough to struggle with at home, whenever its own public force is applied to support tyranny. As a counter-concert among the *people* of *different* nations is impossible, it is henceforth then intended, that Sovereigns shall legislate at their own discretion, and that no nation shall ever be able to right its own wrongs,

wrongs, (the example of Poland even shewing, that, when a *prince* is disposed to concur with his own people in improving the Constitution of the nation, permission is to be denied even for a measure of *mutual* happiness.) — Each nation is, therefore, to be considered as designed to be governed by an enemy *within* and an enemy *without*; and every order in society, whether civil or religious, is to vanish before an union of military despotism.

Terrible as is this evil, it has led to one still greater, because more active, and having deeper consequences; I mean the re-union of several Princes for the *subjugation of the rest*. — Each evil, however, is founded upon the same common principle, namely, a military combination. In the one case, many Princes join, from fear and a common interest, for domestic purposes; in the other, a few of the more potent league from a direct ambition for foreign conquests. In the one case, war is made against the people only; in the other, against both people and princes. In the one case, the object may be negative; but, in the other, it is clearly positive. — Events, perhaps, originally suggested only the first species of league to Austria and Prussia; but Russia has now joined with them in forming the second species; — for, it cannot be supposed, that Austria and Prussia would lead their forces six hundred miles from home against France, with the *confessed* knowledge of the Russian enter-  
prize

prize meditated against Poland, unless these three powers were in a *previous* and *perfect* understanding with each other, and embarked in a regular system.

— An attack, however, upon Poland on one side, and France on the other, renders the subject of infinite importance to Great Britain; since success may ripen the views of the parties into farther projects, not only dangerous to our commerce and tranquillity, but even to our *existence*.

In the time of the Greeks, Alexander became master of so much of the world as had then figured in history; and the Romans afterwards conquered nearly all of it, which was known even to their geographers. But the present age is open to a still more universal domination; every single region of the globe being now discovered, and every quarter of the globe being within the power of Europe; so that it only remains to obtain the *ascendancy in Europe*. — As the ruin of Rome was accomplished by a triumvirate; so Austria, Russia, and Prussia, taking advantage of the momentary prejudices of Europe against France, are formed at present into a triumvirate, infinitely more formidable than those of the two Cæsars; possessing among them forces the best disciplined and the most numerous in the world; together with dominions protected from all attack, either by means of situation or by contiguity; and having a population of near sixty millions of souls, which almost equals *half of the population of*

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Europe; the whole being trained into strict obedience and union by the help of despotism.

The first prey marked out by this triple-headed monster is Poland; which, if subdued, will augment its dependents to near *seventy millions*. — The next attempt forming is upon France, which, if it succeeds, as it may do, (though God forbid!) their tremendous coalition will rise to *above ninety millions of the most military people in the universe* (making almost *three-fourths* of our whole European population); commanding a *large navy*; and by stretching in a broad, continued, and impenetrable zone across the whole middle of Europe, dividing the north of it from the south. — In the north of Europe there remain Denmark and Sweden, constituting a part of the Baltic shores; but as the triumvirate possess the remainder of these shores, their ambition will probably aim at the whole of them; rendering them subservient to their navy (particularly since, by perfecting the canal across Holstein, they may facilitate their own communication between the Baltic and the Atlantic, while the shutting up the passage of the Sound will totally cut it off to strangers). — In the south of Europe, none will doubt for a moment the fate of European Turkey. The parts of Italy, not already subject to the Austrian connexion, may become in their turn an easier conquest than even Turkey. It is at the same time certain that Spain and Portugal, whose riches are a lure, rather than a protection, will not offer a more successful resistance,

tance, if attacked, than France and Poland; especially after the fall of France and Poland, and perhaps other countries. — And, as to Holland, it cannot avoid being drawn into the devouring vortex, by intrigues or by fear. — It is impossible to specify in this place what will be the order and moment of any one of the above acquisitions; it being sufficient to our argument, that the *whole depends* only upon the will of the allied Potentates. — Two other branches of Europe only remain to be noticed; one of which is the portion of Germany not yet subject to Austria and Prussia; and the other the British empire.

I shall first touch upon *Germany*. — And here I would observe, that Prussia necessarily must have formed its union with Austria upon principles of *mutual* advantage; since a proposal, for example, for restoring to Austria, singly, its *alliance* with France, could not be thought sincere; and the design of plunging Austria into a *dispute with France* was not proper to be avowed; though, as being strongly to be suspected, it was necessary to find powerful disguises to it in other projects, which at the same time required to be of a nature to attract the *concurrence of Russia*. — Was it, then, a compassion for the French King and his family, which was pretended by Austria, after her harsh treatment of the Sovereigns of Poland and Saxony, and after increasing the perils of that family, by adding to those of France? — Neither can Avignon and

the Papal power have been matter of serious concert between two sovereigns on one side, professing the Greek or reformed religion, and a court on the other, which has not only plundered the Catholic clergy in every quarter, but treated even the Pope with indifference in a late supplicatory visit, which at once proved the injuries of the Pontiff, and the resolution taken not to redress them. — Of the same description likewise is what respects the members of the empire who are dispossessed in the German part of France; for the negotiations on this subject having never been seriously countenanced by Prussia, and only officially or secondarily espoused by Austria; Prussia and Austria cannot be conceived to have made themselves principals in a hazardous and expensive war, for a concern negligently pursued during three years, respecting petty states, 500 or 600 miles distant, in the west of Germany; to whom, in fact, they are merely bound by *ceremonials*, to whom also an indemnity is offered by France, of whose cause the merits are more than equivocal, whose disappointments likewise cannot be drawn into a precedent for other matters, and whom therefore it would be so easy and wise on various accounts to lead to a compromise. — Was the ground of *union* then a dread of *democratic* principles? I answer No: for Prussia, for various and well-known reasons, is little exposed to the operation of these; and she had even much to gain by their superior tendency to infect the dominions

dominions of Austria, as well as to terminate the *offensive and virtually exclusive* alliance subsisting between Austria and France. Besides, a prudent conduct, with the redress of grievances, and the assistance derivable from the concert of princes whenever danger occurred, rendered the King of Prussia much safer at home, than a dubious war could make him; and, if he had suspected any real cause of dread behind him, he never would have marched the chief of his finest forces into distant countries, with himself at the head of them. — As to Russia, whose subjects have no communication with the rest of mankind even in language, whose civilization must precede her liberty, and who by the aid of one portion of her numerous subjects can crush sedition in the other; *her* sovereign has nothing yet to fear from the declaration of the Rights of Man, which can divert her from her general system of politics. — If these several objects then furnish no motive by which Prussia can at once both be *itself* actuated, and receive therein the *concurrence* of Austria; no motive, which it can both *possess* secretly and *avow* openly in the negotiation, a negotiation in which Russia, we are always to remember, bears a share as a principal; nothing adequate remains in the way of motive, besides *ambition and the desire of conquest*. These detestable incentives I affirm are sufficiently congenial to the *practice* of Princes, to have been mutually offered and accepted, as the basis of a new-born friendship, between Courts



long habituated to mutual jealousy, opposition, and even hatred.

It is necessary, therefore, next to discover what is the specific *prize* which each party has proposed to itself at the present moment, or *may aspire to hereafter*, under such a treaty, in which it must never be forgotten that Russia has concurred. — And here we may venture to say, that *Prussia* could not look to France or to Turkey for *any* booty, nor even to Poland for the *whole* of it. France and Turkey are not contiguous to her; and, if the whole of the booty were to have been extracted from Poland, it is reasonable to think that the Prussian Monarch would have staid at home to look after it in person, as being too jealous to receive it through so hazardous a channel as Russia; nor, indeed, would Russia itself be likely to have undertaken the whole trouble of this conquest, merely to transfer the chief of it to others. A principal incitement, therefore, of Prussia, either present or future, either openly agreed upon or secretly in contemplation, must probably, or (which is enough for my purpose) may possibly be in the neighbouring parts of Germany; — leaving Poland and Turkey thus chiefly to Russia and Austria, but *principally* perhaps to Russia; — for Austria is led by its *various* pretensions to quarter itself not only on the German part of France, but upon a part of Germany itself, which is a rich field of plunder. That Germany can ever cease to be an object of interest to an

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*Emperor of Germany*, is impossible; since an Emperor, who recollects that his imperial post was formerly hereditary, will naturally prefer ruling absolutely by right, to ruling nominally by election (which, we may observe, implies an abolition of the rights of the German Electorates). In the next place, Bavaria is notoriously the subject of Austrian ambition. Lastly, the interview at Pilnitz has been *officially* acknowledged by the parties to have had Germany for one of its objects; but that it was not an object in a *favourable* sense, is proved from the secrecy observed in it at the moment (the insulted Elector of Saxony having been present only at a part of the conferences), as well as from nothing having been since done to procure the concurrence of the other co-estates to any important constitutional measures. — Is it, however, of no importance to be able to apportion, with accuracy, these several *objects* among the concerted powers; as there is field enough for all, and the means exist of pleasing each in *various* manners. It is only requisite to shew that the *whole* concern is a subject of ambition; and that, in arranging it, they have no consent to wait for but their *own*.

If these then are, or may *become*, the immediate objects of this triumvirate, (and either supposition is sufficient to demand a counteraction on the part of Europe, I mean the *remnant* of Europe; for, the most important part of Europe is in the league,) it is next necessary to shew that the views of the

triumvirate may be accomplished, on the side of Germany, with the same facility as in Poland and Turkey. — The independent parts of Germany are chiefly of four descriptions : first, several great successions about to end in distant or female branches (as Bavaria and Saxony), or else in the Austrian or Prussian families : secondly, various ecclesiastical states, which, whether great or small, being only *life-possession*s, may, without much opposition, be converted into hereditary temporal possessions ; (the very treaty of Westphalia upon which the ecclesiastical Electors insist so much, having in the branches of it concluded through Sweden, secularized eight archbishoprics or bishoprics ; of which four are now in the hands of Prussia, *the pretended enemy of innovation*, and two of Hanover :) thirdly, we find small municipal governments, over which a monarch may be made to rule without much resistance, and indeed without great violence offered to *hereditary* rights : and, lastly, petty fiefs and principalities, which, together with the other more important states of Germany not before included, must indiscriminately follow the law of the strongest. These states, it must, at the same time, be observed, are all separated from one another, or else all intermingled with the dominions of Austria and Prussia ; consequently unable of themselves to coalesce, even if they felt sufficiently alarmed for the purpose. Lastly, some of these states, from timidity, folly, bribery, present interest, and connexion, and the ecclesiastical

fiastical states from pride and bigotry, (for they have no successors, whose happiness or safety can form an object of their cares,) will follow the train of leaders, who, at a more convenient moment, will join their ruin to that of the others. — What then is to prevent this project; whenever it is seriously entertained, from succeeding? Does not the Germanic corps owe its safety to the Germanic Constitution? and, is not the Germanic Constitution alone indebted for its perpetuity to Foreign protection, and of late particularly to that of France or of Prussia? — that is, is not Austria *alone* able to subdue the whole, if she were free from check; and will not its ruin be *inevitable*, when Austria is assisted by the voluntary concurrence of Prussia and Russia, and by the constrained aid derived from Poland and other conquests? Besides, some attention for a time will be paid to the parties in possession, the *great* object for the moment being to secure supremacy and a support in all ambitious projects, with a reversion as to the rest. — So much for *Germany*; only again repeating, that, in a concern so full of duplicity as politics, possibility is to be regarded with as much jealousy as certainty; for caution will be late, when opportunity for using caution is at an end.

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We come now to the *British Empire*, which at first sight may appear to be safe by its solitude and  
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its neutrality, as well as by its prosperity and resources. But I shall paint a picture alarming even to itself. — Our population, amounting to twelve millions of souls, is weakened by being divided between two islands, the principal of which, being of a longitudinal form, can with difficulty be defended. — Its land-forces being few, a *navy* must form its great defence; and here, in case of invasion, we come to the uncertain operations of winds and waves: as likewise to the ignorance (as in the time of the Danes) where a northern hostile fleet will direct its attack, whether on our East or West coast; and whether a Southern hostile fleet is to portend invasion to Great Britain or to Ireland; at the same time that a strong guard must be opposed to the ports of the Low Countries in the East. — The foundation of all these hostile naval armaments is to be had in the various naval forces belonging to the Baltic, to the Low Countries, to France, and to the Mediterranean; or it is to be had in the will of despotism alone; for, it would be a part of the pride of ambitious Princes to exceed in naval matters the sudden maritime efforts of Rome against Carthage. Their distance too from us is short, and therefore the expence and maritime skill called for are less; and, if a lodgment is once made upon our territory, if our naval arsenals are once destroyed, if the resources of the Baltic shall be closed, while those of America are distant, (as Ireland requires a fleet to transport over to us its re-inforcements of troops,)

troops,) what shall we have to oppose to the innumerable land-forces, which may then be poured in upon us?—I shall say nothing of our national debt, and the immensity of our paper circulation; —Rather let us look to our foreign dependencies, Great Britain is capable of considerable efforts against enemies at a distance, on account of her comparative wealth, and the aids which she obtains in *detail* from every quarter of the globe. But as all her foreign possessions are detached, they can neither assist herself, nor succour each other, whenever her enemies, no longer fighting her at arms length, but grappling with her at home, confine her to her native resources. In short, the fate of Tyre, Carthage, Genoa, Venice, Flanders, and Holland, must be the fate of Great Britain, and of every trading power under similar circumstances; in other words, they must depend upon their proportional stamina of population, in case of domestic invasion. As to India, it has its separate dangers. — Let Britain then lend an ear to a word in season. Let her view her danger; her possible danger only, it is true; but a danger still to be guarded against, as much as if it were real; because it can only be successfully guarded against, by being so in time. If our measures are not as instantaneous as vigorous, our only chance will be to be the last devoured; and, in the interim, to be kept in constant alarm and expensive but unavailing exertion.

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As to the Concert of Princes, as far as it is directed against pretended *seditions* in this country, it is not only dangerous in a constitutional view, but it is useless; and, as far as it is aimed against prince and people united, its evils are still greater. — Fatal indeed would be *our* situation, if our Sovereign attempted to enter into foreign combinations of a despotic and offensive nature, so ill suited to the genius both of our nation and of its government; — but no less fatal would it be to *himself*, because whoever cannot give essential *aid*, or cause essential *terror* to the triumvirate, may be used at first as an instrument, but must naturally at last become its victim, as being the only concluding service to which he can be applied. The family dominions of Hanover and Osnaburg, and the foreign dominions of the British Crown, would successively disappear; and with them, at last, the very seat of his government; but not before terror had led him to abandon rotten boroughs, corruption, religious test-laws, &c. &c. both here and in Ireland; as well as every prejudice, however fondly cherished, which could prevent the chearful and effectual concurrence of every portion of his people in the general defence. — If he means, therefore, to remain his *own master* at home and abroad, he must beware of contributing to form a foreign tribunal *superior to himself*, in which other associated potentates already possess a lead, which by the nature of their population, resources, and continental situation,

tion, they must *always retain*.—To depend upon *family connexions* in the triumvirate, would be weak indeed, after viewing what passed in the first and second triumvirate of Rome, and still more recently between Austria and Saxony; especially as all violation of family connexion, whenever called for, may be thrown upon the two other triumvirs, who in truth may have exacted the sacrifice.

But let us terminate this part by a single question or two. Great Britain can now obtain the *just* objects of her inclinations from any *single* power in Europe;—but can she do this, if the triumvirate goes on, and succeeds in its pursuits; especially after the example of triumphant resistance lately exhibited by *Russia*? Great Britain certainly never can be more happily circumstanced, than when she is able to negotiate upon the Continent, without the medium of *any ally* whatever; for, a system of alliances among Potentates, is like a system of connexion for paper-circulation among spendthrifts or traders, where each is answerable not only for his own transactions, but for those of his neighbours. — But if allies are necessary, where, let us ask, after Poland and France are incorporated into the league, or rendered neutral, or incapacitated for action, where shall we find such? where is there *one*, which is vigorous, effective, and to be depended upon, within our reach? and is it wise, or *pardonable* then, to suffer us to be reduced to a situation so  
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subject, so calamitous, and so irremediable, as is here described?

I shall now pause to answer the objection of those who may think these cautions visionary, particularly as being novel. — But it is for the very reason that they will *seem* visionary, that they may really cease to be so; for, at no period is an enemy's success more practicable, than when his movements are unexpected. — Besides, human affairs have lately quitted their languid current, in which they rolled on sleepily from one period to another. Their old routine has given way to tumultuous commotion, and to sudden accidents attended with permanent effects; and, as several of the parts of human society have newly increased, and others have recently lost their spring and vigor, a future judgment of their position and effects must be formed by a strict and prompt attention to their principles. — It is enough for a wise man, then, to put to himself the following queries. Have Prussia and Austria forgotten their political antipathies, and has Russia joined itself to them? are they powerful, both separately and in union? are they ambitious, and have they got *scant* and in part almost possession of the prey at present in their pursuit? can they be false to *others* when it is their interest to be false; and true to *themselves* when it is their interest to be true? and have they not already learned in Poland the secret of gaining dominion

dominion *without war*, by a friendly compromise? — What stands then in the way of a second partition of Poland, when their forces are in the heart of it, in spite of old promises and a recent treaty? Are they not already also on the frontier of France? Have they not fascinated every court of Europe by specious arguments or by real terrors, so as to leave the nations, they are attempting to hunt down, bereft of every ally? are they not acting upon a deep plan, long concerted, and profoundly secret? are not military operations frequently rapid? and shall we stand like gaping idiots, staggered by the very *force* of truth, and yet crying out, is all this *possible*? — Yes, it is possible; a part of it is acting; a conspiracy (which will eventually become one against the whole human race) is begun, such as never was begun before, because it never was practicable before; and its object is in part even completed, before we have adverted to its existence. — Where is the British Minister: is he dead? Does he trust to cobweb treaties, to flimsy faith, to family connexions, when an event, when a *revolution*, as extraordinary as that of France, is under issue; some of the essential parts of which may be accomplished in the following three months of this campaign, in a way never to be recalled? Will not every conquest made by the triumvirate stand upon a common bottom; and will not the triumvirate find a common interest, therefore, in mutually persisting

persisting in them, (as in the former case with Poland; where, though humanity pleaded for favour to its miserable remnant, yet the fear of the doctrine of resurrections operating, and one crime leading to another, the same triumvirate, which robbed it in 1775, not only refuses to it a constitution which might restore it to its strength and its possessions, but apparently meditates a farther division of its territory?) — Does the Minister wish then the ruin not only of Britain, but of *mankind*, to be dated from the æra of his administration? Will he hazard his character, with the present age and posterity, by a false or by a negligent step, in the most momentous transaction which ever came under the deliberation of man? Will he allow it to be said, that he had not eyes to see the imminent danger, nor address or power to avert it? Success itself, in an *escape*, will not permit the world to forgive him for leaving any thing upon this occasion to the slightest hazard. A wise man never gives the staff in politics out of his hand; never trusts himself to those, who make a merit of successful deceit; never places the public safety, of which he is master, in the hands of men of whom he is not master. In the first Roman triumvirate, Julius Cæsar gave his daughter in marriage to Pompey, and then ruined this son-in-law, who in foolish confidence had helped him to his power. In the second triumvirate, Lepidus gave up his brother to be butchered, as Mark

Anthony

Anthony did his uncle, and Augustus his friend Cicero; the triumvirs treating these as *mutual* sacrifices to their pretended *common* good, or, in other words, to the basest self-interest. — After these specimens so deeply recorded in history by consequent evils which operated during sixteen centuries, let us trust nothing to promises, or to original good intentions, and still less to family affinities, liable to terminate by various means. Family affinity, if it influenced at all, instead of adding to our safety, would even add new hazards to our constitution, at which, I hope, it is here sufficient to have hinted. — Man, in short, is the same animal, ambition the same seducing motive, and politics the same treacherous and cruel school, that we read of in Tacitus, in Machiavel, and in De Retz. There is no reliance therefore in any thing but in the most vigorous precautions; and when these are fully taken, it is the *surplus* alone which must be left to Providence. In politics, none must have a *power* joined to an *interest* to do mischief, whatever be the purity of their original intentions; for, if they possess power, mischief sooner or later will be committed, and their promises will be as easily, as early, and as unfeelingly, broken, as those of Prussia to Poland. — I shall prepare for quickly resuming this subject, by briefly analyzing the powers of the several component parties of the triumvirate.

*Russia* is an empire as singular in its present state as it was in its commencement. — She exhibits the picture of North America in Europe, or of an old country and a new country combined into one; having a population which (owing to easy means of subsistence, which render marriages early and frequent) augments *one-fifth* in every twenty years. She prospers in defiance of public and private despotism; she displays a partial luxury in the midst of wildernesses; she has a civilized cabinet at the head of a semi-barbarous nation; her people are obstinate, yet docile; and her peasants, though awed by their masters, yet are brave when soldiers. — With thirty millions of people who are *thus rapidly and progressively increasing*, *Russia* is placed invulnerable, in the north-eastern corner of Europe. Her territories are bounded by deserts, by woods, and by inhospitable climates; she derives strength from the very barrenness and diffusion of her empire; and she is situated out of the reach of all maritime approaches, though herself possessing a considerable navy for *offensive* purposes. She has also myriads of disciplined forces, and a peculiar strength in light troops for keeping in awe large tracts of country; and almost all her forces combat with the advantage of different religious prejudices, which lessen the terrors of death; and they are also peculiarly hardy and capable of fatigue. If her  
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empire is vast in its extent, yet her troops, her sailors, and her stores, move through it with incredible celerity, owing to water communications, and to the abundance of horses belonging to her peasantry, which admit of *conveyances*, both *for her forces and for warlike stores, by post*, (either in waggons, or else in sledges upon the snow.)—At the end of her last war but one, she remitted taxes; and at the end of the war just concluded, she has not augmented them.—She loses subjects in war, but replaces them by those whom she vanquishes, or by the excess of the number born from her own people over those who die; she increases, therefore, both in war and in peace; and it is this internal or this extraneous increase of men, accompanied at the same time with an augmentation of cultivation, of arts, and of wealth, which (unnoticed by the rest of Europe) enables her, upon every struggle, to appear with renewed and accumulated strength.—Lastly, she skirts the whole northern frontier of Asia; she possesses the means of attacking its rich western flank from north to south; and (since distance is nothing to Russians) she is not without access to its eastern flank, and to the rich mines of Western America; but, above all, (in consequence of having the means of invading our East-Indian possessions from the north, facilitated by the help of water-carriage on great lakes and descending rivers; as well as by having a probable opportunity, through the aid of

Austria, of commanding one or both of the two navigations of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulph,) she seems to draw close to the moment of obtaining possession of that *communication between western and eastern nations*, which in *all ages* of the world has uniformly and signally aggrandized those who have held it. — In one word, she is become the modern *northern hive*, pouring forth, not disorderly, but marshalled and obedient, swarms, increasing yearly in their numbers by land and by sea, all recognizing a common chief, whose watchful eyes turn alike to the East and to the West, to search for opportunities of plunder, either in company or alone; rendering barbarians her immediate instruments, and the rich her certain victims; and being likely soon to possess that most dangerous of all combinations; namely, numbers, arms, and wealth.

*Austria* is the power next in order. Though possessed of fewer vacant lands and fewer scattered settlements than Russia, she has nevertheless in her *eastern* territories the means, by better management, of greatly augmenting her people, now amounting to twenty millions, and *still increasing*. All that she may receive in the way of accession, either of territory or of people, will enhance this advantage. — As to the military dispositions of this power, they are well known; her family connexions also, as far as she can depend upon them, are considerable; and her influence over every

every thing turned to the quarter of the Mediterranean will soon become conspicuous, when acting in concert with Russia and Prussia.

Lastly, we come to *Prussia*, possessing a population nearly equal to a third of that of Austria. Prussia is a factitious state, it is true, and requires the continuance of the same good management, which brought it gradually forwards to its present comparative prosperity, and it is also void of internal means (like those of Russia and Austria) for multiplying her people; — but yet she possesses an immense army, which her late King, in consequence of applying the doctrines of mechanics to tactics, has brought to the highest pitch of known perfection. At the same time she has nothing to fear from her debts, her taxes, her nobles, her clergy, from assemblies of states, from an exposed state of commerce, from her frontiers (as long as they remain protected by her present allies), or from any cause whatever but her follies and her dangerous associations. — Had the present Monarch of Prussia, alas! consulted the writings of his sagacious predecessor, he would have found hints enough to alarm him respecting the power and situation of Russia; and, upon proper inquiry, he would have known that the state of Poland had also made an impression upon his mind; since, not only from the fear of Russia and of Austria, but in order to make some atonement to humanity and to character, he wished to give to the re-



mains of Poland such a constitution as should secure its *independence* as a barrier, and form a *compensation* for its wrongs. But Prussia has disdained prudence and generosity; and, in so doing, has proved the magnitude and solidity of her temptations.

Such then are the three potentates, already so contiguous by situation, as to be able to give each other effectual support and protection, who are now compacted together in military union upon principles of conquest, as is demonstrated by the *late* division of Poland, and by the present compromise respecting it. — Common sense shews what is or may be in their *power*, and human nature shews to what that power will *prompt them*. — It therefore becomes necessary to know what means there are to oppose it, in the remaining scattered fragments of Europe, should Poland and France, as before-mentioned, either be *incorporated into their system, be disabled, or be rendered neutral*. — But, as I reserve this topic for my conclusion, it is fair that I should be allowed in the mean time to shew the *evils* of a system of universal military despotism, both to the human race suffering it, and to the conquerors imposing it.

## PART II. OF LETTER II.

*Published July 30, 1792.*

**I**N delineating the nature and consequence of *universal military* despotism, it is unnecessary to point at particular persons; and, therefore, while I found myself upon general facts not to be contested, none can complain but those, whose very complaint will naturally bring their motives into suspicion.

We desire then to know how far Princes may become degenerate and mischievous, when the fear of their subjects and neighbours is extinguished? — The solution is easy. We have only to inquire what must be the result of ignorance and want of sentiment, of jealousy and irritability, of caprice and ungoverned passions, when instigated by intrigue, and joined to power without a limit. — I am no opposer of monarchs; I detest also inflammatory language; and I feel a sort of respect towards a part of the present triumvirate, in comparison with other Princes. But I still must persist in affirming, that the character of military despotism, when viewed in its excesses, is such as I have described it; — and that it is to this pitch that the system of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, in defiance of their present less culpable intentions, must ultimately arrive, if it accomplishes what must succe-

sively become its different objects. — I say, this is what their system must *terminate in* : but, first, let us see where their system actually *begins*.

The *maximum* then of foreign liberty, to which they lend their suffrage, is clearly *less* than that exhibited in the New Constitution of Poland ; for, otherwise, they would have tolerated a Constitution highly acceptable both to its People and its King. This maximum also *does not exceed* the portion of freedom to which their respective states are confined at present ; since, if they thought a greater degree of liberty than this proper in their own dominions, they would long ago have introduced it, having had unbounded power for that purpose. But this maximum may be *much less* than is even allowed to their own subjects ; since vanquished nations, liable to revolt, will be governed by rules far more rigid than are necessary for native subjects ; that is, in an exact proportion to their love of liberty, and to the degree in which they might profit by the use of it, they are to be deprived of its various blessings ; for, while petty tyrants are obliged to enter into a compromise with liberty, great tyrants will employ the briefer remedy of crushing that liberty altogether. This maximum then must be such for example, as will seem revolting to the British empire as well as to France, (whether the latter compares it with her present or her late constitution,) and I hope to every other nation. — We have here, however, spoken only of the  
*maximum*

*maximum* of permitted liberty, and this too at the present moment; for, in the descending scale, there are many gradations before we arrive at that *minimum* of liberty, without which it is impossible for afflicted man to exist as the subject of tyranny; gradations, of which Europe may yet console itself, that it can only find in Asia and Africa any present examples.

But as the *power* of tyranny increases, when in concert with tyranny in contiguous countries; so the *misery*, which springs from it, redoubles when the tyranny becomes universal. — When despotic States border upon such as are free, the despot naturally becomes softened: he sees in his neighbours a censor of his actions; his people also borrow their feelings and knowledge, and give him alarm; conviction is snatched from him in spite of himself, as to the genial effects of liberty upon wealth and population, which are the necessary foundation of all the taxes and armies with which he has to face his enemies; even the love of fame also creeps into his heart, and, like Alexander, he wishes to be praised by Athenians; if he presses likewise his subjects too severely, they flee from him, and commerce and arts no less certainly disdain his injustice and restraints. But foreigners are of great benefit in other respects. They ally themselves by marriage and affinity to the Sovereign and to the subject; they are employed to educate their children; the books they write pass into the hands of leading men among them; specimens of their arts excite  
attention;

attention; they become ministers, generals, prelates, and perhaps sovereigns; and despotic princes sometimes, quitting the dungeon of their own dominions, where they act only as the head jailors, learn, from the example of neighbouring nations, how much more sincere and beneficial is the attachment which is founded upon affection and interest, than that which is founded upon fear and restraint. In proof of this, we may refer to Russia, where almost every brilliant transaction, from the time of the Czar Peter to the present day, has chiefly been owing to foreign instruments, or to a travelled or foreign sovereign, or to Russians, who directly or *indirectly* have been indebted for their education to strangers. — Darkness is the natural state of the human mind without improvements. In the darkness of the night, various travellers may find their way, if a single one in company is possessed of a torch; but, suppose that lonely torch extinguished, how great is the darkness! A handful of men extracted from some of the enlightened parts of Europe have been the torch-bearers of Russia; and the consequence is, that there are few nations who seem so incapable under present circumstances of taking a *lead* in the arts and sciences, and who in truth are so little possessed of formal instructions, but who at the same time are more *effectually* instructed in many particulars of practice; wholly in consequence of their having received foreigners among them, not from one, but from *different* nations.

nations. — But darkness is not only the lot of man in his *native* nothingness; — but, whenever tyrants reign in solitude, they create an *artificial* darkness; for, with them, education, knowledge, activity, social intercourse, love of one's country, and the chief of the moral virtues, are considered in the odious light of resisting principles with respect to their tyranny; and are therefore proscribed and extinguished: and, as to commerce and agriculture, which depend upon *capital* as their first mover, the savage despot seizes upon that capital as fast as it appears, and thus “cuts down the tree of which he wishes to gather the fruit.”

To know how little there is spontaneous in the region of despotism, and how greatly liberty on the other hand by its nature is prolific; we have only to compare the enterprizes both of body and mind, formerly exhibited by certain small free communities of Greece and of Asia, with those exhibited by the immense dominions of despotism, in which they are immersed in modern times; a contrast, which is the more remarkable in several views, as the Mahommedan proprietors of these very dominions, in the middle ages, while they enjoyed a certain portion of freedom joined to their religious enthusiasm, were not only memorable for feats of arms, but, in consequence of availing themselves of fragments of instruction derived from the above-mentioned communities, (or from the Romans, who were *also* their pupils,) remained for some time  
signalized

signalized in science, in agriculture, and in arts, till the night of general military despotism returned to darken them.——In like manner two or three modern towns, retired in the Alps, whose inhabitants together do not amount to sixty thousand souls, have produced more remarkable men (arms alone excepted) in the present century, than the whole empire of Russia, which now contains above half as many millions, and than several other European kingdoms taken in addition.

The several great monarchies of the world have proved great experiments upon the human character, both as to the prince and the subject.—They have in general been acquired by some species of talents, which talents they have soon absorbed and extinguished; and the master has then become the most depraved of mankind, and the subject the most degenerate. They have each been rendered worse, because the extent of the dominion to be governed necessarily required the government to be *military*, for the purpose of retaining the distant parts of it, which would naturally remain obedient to nothing besides force.—Those, who have force, are soon led to think that it supersedes every other requisite of government, whether for home or foreign objects: and the principle or the consequences of this persuasion spread from the sovereign to the landed proprietor, and to every order of men. None are instructed or will humble themselves to receive instruction; and the passions  
of

of the human breast, which it is one of the chief objects of education to suppress, redouble all their fury. The evil then acts continually backwards and forwards upon itself, and princes and their subjects debase one another in turn, till one universal deluge of misery and confusion soon overwhelms the whole, and no where an ark is found to save the remnant of mankind, nor does an olive-branch any where give token of a resting-place.—Wretched people, but *still more* wretched prince! For, among the first, some escape a part of the evil from their insignificance; but the latter is constantly placed on an elevation, as a mark to the arrows of fortune, without understanding the manner in which he ought to enjoy its favours.—It is in vain, that, in the course of these horrors, a single man (who probably has been introduced to power by that *instability* in the succession to it, which is incident to despotic states) starts up to remedy them. Mankind are only permanently governed by fixed institutions; and, over a corrupted empire, a single virtuous prince acts merely the part of a fleeting minister. He soon perishes either by the course of time, or by the earlier hand of violence; too good to be endured by those, whose only support, or safety, is in the profligacy or ignorance of their sovereign; leaving no trace behind him but that of unavailing memory, and fully proving how impossible it is to correct despotism otherwise than by abolishing it.—This is not rhapsody. The mild, peace-loving,



ving, and literary Augustus was followed by four monsters, beginning with Tiberius, and ending with Nero; Titus was succeeded by Domitian, as was Marcus Aurelius by Commodus; and what is the more remarkable, Augustus had the choice of his successor. At last, by a series of villany and distraction, the Roman empire, too immense to fall a prey to any thing in the *first* instance but itself, became in part conquered, and then divided; and, though danger caused afterwards some exertions, they were oftener the exertions of baseness and compromise than of courage and prudence; till the last remnant of the empire in the East died the most effeminate of deaths, falling into the hands of the barbarous Mahomedans with scarcely a struggle.— In like manner these Mahomedans themselves, following a similar despotic course, being sanguinary to their subjects, and feeble towards their enemies; forgetting the very art which is first learned and last lost among despots, namely, that of war; living upon the very entrails of their dominions, without one care taken for their prosperity; and disdainng all knowledge, (which from the nature of their language and institutions cannot easily be forced upon them from without); are now kept together more by the influence of their *religion* than of their policy, but are still ready to fall a prey to the first potentate which shall storm their capital.— Whoever goes through the history of what are called the four great monarchies of the world, and joins  
to

to it the history of the several monarchies in the *East*, not included in that imperfect catalogue, will find the same succession of follies and calamities, with only an exception in China; which yet is but a specious exception, or else, as far as it is real, is solely owing to fixed *institutions* that are not to be shaken even by conquerors from without or by despots from within.

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But to descend from *general* topics, let us prove minutely, but briefly, in what manner an universal military despotism will injure, first, the *several orders* of society; next, the interests of inferior princes; and, lastly, the persons and families of despots themselves.

To begin then with the several orders of society, let us first touch upon the *aristocracy*.—In Turkey, there is little of this subsisting as to families; it being the policy of that government to interrupt successions. In Russia, the great by birth are discountenanced, and live for the most part disgusted at Moscow; while new men, foreigners, and favourites, find their way at court. In Spain, the grandees are not permitted to quit the court or the capital; or else, when they wish to travel, even within Spain itself, they are obliged to give an account of their motions; and upstarts are daily rising to supplant them in court favour. Even lately

lately in France, their nobles were all obliged, by a sort of etiquette, which was the result of a court system, to serve in the army; at the same time that the allurements of a polished and enlightened capital were sufficient of themselves to insure their residence in the neighbourhood of the court. I need not say more as to the aristocracy.—Next come the *clergy*, whose dignitaries, even in France, were viewed with a jealous eye, when they pretended to reside at their post of duty in the provinces. In Russia, it was the boast of Czar Peter to have reduced his clergy to much more submissive terms than Louis XIV. had done. In the dominions of the Austrian family, notwithstanding the pretended devout character of the late Empress, the clergy are plundered, and rendered daily more and more impotent, by every branch of her descendants in their different dominions; and the Pope has experienced repeated insults or litigations from them all. The decline not only of religious credulity, but even of religious faith, daily weakens the support of the clergy; and their present riches are a perpetual temptation to needy princes, or a source of discontent to the subject; so that such part of these riches as is tenable will be assumed by the despot; and such part as is unpopular will be surrendered to the people, to soothe them in some moment of dissatisfaction; and be replaced probably in some inadequate manner, or else end in the clergy being thrown upon the people for voluntary contributions.

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As to the powers and privileges of the hierarchy, we know from the cases of Henry VIII. of England, and Czar Peter, how fashionable it will seem to despots to be declared the supreme heads of their respective churches; and, even supposing that they should be inclined to contemplate the clergy rather as a source of support than of hostility, it is still natural that they should think of making this order of men at least *obedient and economical*; for which the method is perfectly simple, and free from the objections suggested by Mr. Hume. I mean, by reducing the whole clerical establishment to its gospel simplicity; appointing all the members of it; giving them a bigoted and servile education; rendering the chiefs of it few, and utterly dependent; proscribing all novelties; making its ceremonies payable out of civil funds; and obliging civil and military personages occasionally to lend such a character of ostentation to it, as it is thought necessary that it should receive. So much for the clergy.—Next comes the *Senate*, compounded in part of the preceding orders. Civil power we have supposed extinct; for *inter arma leges silent*: of what use then is the senate? To do *good*, it is inadequate; and when there is no public, it cannot even expect the pay given to mercenaries for the *evils* it might otherwise sanction as an intermediate body. To see the extremity of the evil, let it be remembered that Caligula thought his horse good enough for a consul; and that Didius, after having

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bought the Roman purple, which was openly put to auction by the prætorian guards, went directly to the senate to say, that they wanted an emperor, and he was the man proper for their purpose; and Charles XII. of Sweden, when he was wandering about Germany and Poland, wasting the forces and treasures of his people, and embroiling their interests, signified to his senate, that, if they refused obedience to his orders, he would send back his boot to govern them.—As to the *third estate*, it wants its name, when the second is extinguished. But even in its more expanded shape, of private citizens, what is it but the mere substratum of power? beings, who are to labour, but not to enjoy; who are to suffer, but not to complain; and who are to contribute, without receiving any other protection for it, than is suggested by caprice or commanded by interest. Safe neither in property nor in person; denied the power of locomotion for their *own* purposes, but forced to abandon their homes and families for the objects of power; dragged into wars against their inclinations, there to provoke the revenge of an enemy, or to confirm their own slavery and that of other nations; their property and their labour pressed into the service of the despot or his subalterns, whenever it suits their purposes; no utterance allowed to any of their wrongs, each man being afraid even of his neighbour in private; these, and a thousand similar circumstances, are so ordinary in despotic countries

as scarcely to excite notice. — *Trade*, commerce, agriculture, and the arts, cannot exist where capital, laws, activity, and knowledge, are wanting. We might as well expect the vegetable and animal world to exist without the vivifying powers of the sun. — Besides, tyranny never will allow that long continuance of tranquillity and confidence, and that identity of laws, which are necessary for the slow processes of industry, and for that sisterhood in it, without which there is little of it which can prosper. Arts of amusement, such as music, and watch-making, (which last was the occupation of the grave Charles the Fifth,) or else the military profession, while attention to it is found necessary; together with certain establishments of a public nature, which though profusely or unskilfully conducted, yet will be sure of protection, because in the hands of him, who is master of every thing, may to a certain degree flourish; and botany, chemistry, and mathematics, may retain a hazardous existence, because they may be cultivated without lending any spring and extension to the human mind, and therefore without causing umbrage; but accident alone can lead us to expect any great enlargement of this catalogue of objects, beyond mere articles of necessity or caprice. — The effect of an inroad made upon the *laws* is too easily comprehended to require much illustration; since from the judicial and legislative branches resting in the same hands, the administration of justice

must necessarily acquire much instability; and the violence and caprice of the despot will add to this evil; and still more his favoritism and the venality of his subalterns. Courts of law in these situations only afford a more expensive mode of arriving at *injustice*, having the single advantage of bringing suits to some issue. Be it observed, however, that under these circumstances forensic talents have little chance of making progress, unless under the wing of favour; and that the professional pay of the lawyer is here small, and his consideration in his country trifling, compared with what is known in England; where the law has been the foundation of many noble and wealthy families, as well as of the most splendid reputations; some of our very barristers, for example, having attracted notice in various parts of Europe. — We now come to two critical bodies, *ministers* and the army. In England we have seen ministers capable of holding their sovereign at bay; and one of the common modes of attaining a post in administration is, by becoming important in opposition: the career to high offices also is open to all persons; and to be ejected from ministry is no stigma, but may even produce honour. How different is this from despotic countries? Where ministers live by the breath of a tyrant; where death, banishment, or disgrace, attend a reverse of fortune; where it is commonly an etiquette never to reinstate the fallen; and where they are of-

ten treated with contempt in the very concerns of their office. No senate opens a road to power ; and to think of *alarming* the public, on public topics, would be instant death. In this state of things, there is nothing to expect but from prostitution, from bribery, and from intrigue ; the dispenser of offices and power being commonly a mistress in male courts, a paramour in female ones, and pimps, panders, domestics, flatterers, and intriguers, in all of them. — Lastly, we are to speak of the *army* ; for the army, at least, as the instrument over all, will be thought an order in the state, not only sure of protection, but of solid encouragement. By no means. The common soldier is no where more oppressed than in despotic states ; for, to give room to keep up many troops, he is poorly paid : and, to supply the want of inclination, he is made a mere machine, the moving power of which is his fear. In all armies too, there is the distinction of body-guards or prætorian bands on the one side, and the marching regiments or troops of the line on the other. The former may be caressed and the latter neglected : the former are near to the source of court favours, hold the sovereign in their hands, and are the commencers of revolutions ; but the latter are considered as little more than ordinary subjects ; and when any part of them are discontented, the rest are made to oppose them ; which, in a vast army, is perfectly easy. Who can deny too, that favourites proceed by a rapid progress to



principal commands, in defiance of veteran pretensions ; and that civil suspicions and punishments are easily extended to military persons ? Besides, who is there likely to sympathize with liberal feelings in a despotic army, made up by policy from vagrants and banditti, from foreign or from savage materials ; and where every thing is held as much insulated and disconnected as possible, unless where the parties possess kindred principles and interests with the despot ? In short, a great army is easily kept under by military and civil laws, and a few executioners. What then is to be the new privilege, or consolation, of the soldier or officer, who, in addition to military duty, is to be employed to wring taxes from the poor, to enforce punishments, to act perhaps against his friends or his native province, and to take up his quarters in abject or deserted countries ?—Thus we have gone through the principal orders of society, as situated under the blasting operation of a wide-spreading military despotism.

We proceed to our next topic, the interests of *sovereigns of an inferior rank*, in case the evil we are here alluding to should become general.—It is impossible that we cannot remember in history some accounts of the state of *dependent* princes ; and do they not shew the very depths of ignominy ? Homage, tributes, contingents of forces, personal attendance,

tendance, permission necessary to conclude family-marriages, children made into hostages, a traffic often existing for their very thrones, spies set upon their governments; these are some of the instances of their hard fate; and to this state they have been brought, after having first been the prey of war, and of contending parties, and perhaps the victims of the basest treachery and ingratitude.—But I shall not be long on this head. The Apocrypha gives us an account of Alexander, which is too finished and too much in point to call for much addition. It is as follows — “ And Alexander  
 “ made many wars, and won many strong holds,  
 “ and slew the *kings* of the earth, and took spoils  
 “ of many *nations*, inasmuch that the earth was  
 “ quiet before him, [that is, *solitudinem facit, &*  
 “ *pacem apellat* :] whereupon he was exalted, and  
 “ his heart was lifted up; and he gathered a *mighty*  
 “ *strong host*, and ruled over countries, and nations,  
 “ and kings, who became tributaries to him; and  
 “ after these things he fell sick \* \* \*. So Alex-  
 “ ander reigned twelve years, and then died. And  
 “ his servants bare rule every one in his place; and  
 “ after his death they all put crowns upon *them-*  
 “ *selves*; so did their sons after them many years,  
 “ and *evils were multiplied in the earth.*” — Let this extract serve as a warning both to smaller princes and to greater despots.—The present military Concert of Princes, let me only add, is not like the small cloud as big as a man’s hand, mentioned in

Scripture, which swelled into a devouring tempest. No; it is a full-grown evil, born with giant limbs and adult strength, and threatens what it will exactly fulfil, the ruin of all by the sword.—For a little while it will use soft words; but it will be truer in its actions; and after first attacking particular territories and subjects, will end in a war with the whole human race; among which it will reckon princes but as a *bigger sort of subjects*, and often on that very account as parties to be dreaded; and it is in vain to think that the evil has any bounds, when the passion of princes does not consist so much in enjoying, as in acquiring.

We now come lastly to trace this malady of universal military despotism back to its *fountain-head*; for, here again we find, that, as it inflicts calamities upon others, so it spares not its own authors.—In milder monarchies, the sovereign experiences a share of that justice which is permitted to circulate through the nation; for, violence to the reigning prince is rare, on the part of the public, without extreme provocation; and on the part of individuals, it would be useless, as a stranger could not profit by it, since the succession would take its course to his exclusion; and those in the line of succession would suffer too much in reputation, as well as from the effect of the precedent, to attempt it. Hence France, since it became a settled nation, during very many centuries, has had but three dynasties;  
and

and England has changed its order of succession very rarely, except from conquest, confusion of title, and great religious or political provocations. In short, the people have, in general, been appealed to as judges respecting the throne in limited monarchies; and the crown has hence, in general, descended with all the sacredness of an article of *family property*;—But, in despotic ones, the whole is matter of junto and accident; for, as there is very little difference between the candidates, and little animation or knowledge in the public respecting its own affairs, the public seldom interferes in the proceedings at the capital.—We have only, in order to confirm this, to recollect the events of Russia, during the present century; where a succession to the throne is another word for a revolution; and where the prince has been more insecure, both as to life and property, than the subject.—What was the case at Rome? Augustus was suspected to have been poisoned by his wife or by her son, whom he had adopted; as was Titus, by his brother Domitian. In short, death was dealt with so liberal a hand in the form of assassinations, executions, and murders in battle, as well by relations and by pretended friends, as by enemies, that the throne seemed but a slaughtering block.\*—I have already  
cited

\* Let it be considered (says Machiavel) by all such as change republics into absolute governments, in what security those

cited the fate of Alexander, who, though he had a son, had none of his probable wishes executed either with regard to his son or to his dominions. — In Turkey, they have commonly been strict as to the line of succession, on account of the protection given to the descendants of their prophet; that is, on account of a religious prejudice. Let us therefore, and without troubling ourselves with Morocco or Egypt, or with Persia or India, cite the case of China in the words of Montesquieu. — “ In the history of China,” (says this great writer,) “ we find it has had twenty-two “ successive dynasties; that is, it has experienced “ twenty-two *general*, without mentioning a prodigious number of *particular*, revolutions. The three “ first dynasties lasted a long time, because they

those emperors of Rome lived, who strictly observed the laws, in comparison with those who behaved in a different manner; and they will find that Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius, on account of the affections of the senate and people, had no occasion either for prætorian bands or legions; while the most powerful armies were not able to secure Caligula, Nero, Vitellius, and several other bad emperors. Of twenty-six emperors who reigned between Julius Cæsar and Maximian, he adds, that sixteen were murdered, and ten only died a natural death; and that, if a good prince was murdered, it was owing to the corruption which his predecessors had introduced among the soldiery; and, if a bad prince died a natural death, it arose from a degree of good fortune and valour, rarely uniting in one person. *Political Discourses on Livy, b. i. c. 10.*

“ were

“ were wisely administered, and the empire had  
 “ not so great an *extent* as it afterwards obtained.  
 “ But we may observe in general, that all those  
 “ dynasties began very well. Virtue, attention,  
 “ and vigilance, are necessary in China : these pre-  
 “ vailed in the commencement of the dynasties,  
 “ and failed in the end. \* \* \* \* After the three  
 “ or four first princes, corruption, luxury, indo-  
 “ lence, and pleasure, possessed their successors ;  
 “ they shut themselves up in a palace ; their un-  
 “ derstanding was impaired ; their life was short-  
 “ ened ; the family declined ; the grandees rose  
 “ up ; the eunuchs gained credit ; none but chil-  
 “ dren were set on the throne ; the palace was at  
 “ variance with the empire ; a lazy set of people,  
 “ that dwelled there, ruined the industrious part of  
 “ the nation ; the emperor was killed or destroyed  
 “ by an usurper, who founded a family, the *third*  
 “ or *fourth* successor of which went and shut him-  
 “ self up in the *very same palace.*” — Such, then,  
 is the instability of human grandeur, and of a  
 mimicry of the extensive command of Providence ;  
 that, although bought at such hazard, at the ex-  
 pence of so many crimes, and by the sacrifice of  
 so much human happiness, it is scarcely preserved,  
 in despotic countries, for the life of the owner ; is  
 transmitted with little certainty to the immediate  
 descendant ; and (which may give great room of  
 reflection to the *concerned*) is seldom preserved for  
 the succession of *collateral* branches.

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The excesses of ambition are owing to several causes. They are owing, for example, to a species of activity in the human mind, which renders it eager for new passive impressions, and for objects from without; though it is indolent in providing itself with objects from within. Old scenes soon satiate\* and disgust the ungovernable minds of despots, who may destroy nations, but cannot alter their own make and constitution; which require, that temperance, virtue, and information, should aid in procuring them content under a long renewal of the same set of circumstances of body and mind. But since, after satiety, still there arises hope, new objects are still demanded by despots, which are again to be rejected for others yet newer; till at last it is found, that neither variety nor quantity can satisfy a temper once smitten with the vast desire of possessing *every thing*. — Another fatal cause of irritation to the ambition of princes is opposition. Shall the man born to rule find any obstacle? Every thing is therefore to be removed, and a level prostrate plain is to lie between *them* and the objects with which they have connexion. This, again, is a never-ceasing passion, and strengthens in proportion to its habitual indulgence. — A third instigation is the love of praise, which is also inexhaustible. To possess much, and to have used successful art or courage in obtaining it, how flattering, how intoxicating! till at last, like other intoxications, it ceases, and requires new enterprises

to refresh its feelings. Is this all? said Cæsar, when he had possessed himself of all. Alas! *calum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.* — Now and then, perhaps, an uneasy sentiment occurs; but it is soon quieted. “ The parties injured, (says the aggressor,) if they could, would have done the same by myself; I have committed no other wrong, than others have committed before me; the world has forgiven them, and it will forgive me; besides, the conquests I have acquired will be better governed by me than by others; and what signifies it to the people concerned, whether they are governed by others or by me?” — This is the veil of gauze used to cover rapine and blood; and it serves to shelter even the assistance given to *other* despots, by whose means, in return, his *own* proceedings are rendered more secure. — This is the more mortifying to his wretched subjects, who know, that, after all this varied round of guilt, after establishing proscriptions, informers, tortures, and death, and after even selling a privilege for murder, the whole *ends* in private enjoyments the most trivial or the most abominable. Read the authentic memoirs of courts which are *merely arbitrary*, and which are far removed from despotism: if there is not vice in them, yet there is dulness; or else a recourse to popular employments, such as operas, games, exercise, reading, needle-work, and the like; which proves incontestibly, to the observing mind, that happiness lies  
alone



alone (as was before stated) in *virtue, temperance, information, and content* : — Infinitely worse are the courts of *despots*.

I feel much pain in all this description, lest, while I am pursuing facts, I should be thought to quit the feelings of an impartial man. — But the proofs are great, the object is of unspeakable magnitude, and there is no time to lose. — There is a coalition of forces formed, which, like Aaron's rod, will swallow up the forces of every other power. This mischief will happen, without care, before the world suspects it ; and no care is sufficient, but that of demanding an immediate cessation of the Concert of Princes ; for, if the Concert proceeds, and obtains its object, despotism (unknown, as I will do the parties the justice to suppose, to the wishes of the original actors) will rapidly produce its effects. — Scruples will not long delay the horrid tragedy, even if it pass to be acted, in its last scenes, into new and other hands ; for, causes will always accomplish their consequences ; and despotism, having always the same materials to work upon, in those ruling and ruled, will generate these consequences, with a *celerity* of which I shall give but two instances. — The first is that of Alexander, who was, in many respects, the boast of antiquity, but who, instantly after the successful contest which his father and himself had with the free nations of Greece and Thrace ; though he had Philip for his  
father,

father, Aristotle for his tutor, a civilized world, which he much admired, for his judges; though he had peculiar magnanimity, talents, and love of science; yet, in the course of conquering the world, killed his friend in drink, burned a palace to amuse a strumpet, and sighed when his cruel and fantastic power was checked for want of objects. — The second example is drawn from Rome, where, after the calm in human affairs produced by Augustus, none could have suspected a sudden reverse; yet in what a quick succession did four monsters appear, rivaling and surpassing each other in wickedness and mischief, and tormenting, not only foreign nations and their subjects, but carrying slaughter into the bosom of their own families! Soon indeed was it; that Julia, Messalina, Agrippina, and Faustina, shewed that women, in a scene of unbounded license, could be as execrable as men; and still farther to prove that *levity and cruelty* were easily to be associated in the same breast, the same emperors, who either formed the wish that Rome might have but one neck, or were ready to execute the full purport of it, sought to play the part of actors and gladiators upon the stage before their subjects, as the great objects of their ambition.

In one word, men and minor princes, beware! You are in no common times. Powerful princes, instead of attacking *each other* for booty, have begun upon the system of attacking you. Unite on your side; for, it is a common cause. It is in vain  
to

to think, when this new mischief is once under way, that you can say to it, *Go thus far and no farther*. The parties are possessed of this peculiar advantage, that they not only can *produce* large forces, but they keep large forces *always on foot*; and therefore are ready to act at a *moment's warning* in order to secure their objects. After their system has obtained a certain progress, they will be hurried on in it, and become unable to stop themselves. — And do not flatter yourselves that it will ever be retrograde, and least of all on account of the apparent civilization of mankind. We, who are to be *devoured indeed*, are civilized; but remember that those, who are to devour *us*, were yesterday only Tartars and Cossacks, and other savage clans; and that although a few of their leaders have that outside polish, which you see is consistent with stony hearts; yet when these leaders die, or become corrupted, the *stamina* of their subjects are such as fit them for supporting *any project of any nature*.

If you wish to know more upon these topics, read Tacitus and Machiavel, before you ally yourselves to the sovereigns who have joined together in *military Concert*.

## PART III. OF LETTER II.

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second Part.)*

WE might proceed to an immediate conclusion, but the subject is too ample to be soon dismissed; and, as France will be an important and necessary instrument in counteracting the triumvirate, a few impressions in particular must be obviated respecting France as to her foreign politics. — Previous to the late revolution, France was called an *ambitious* power; and in the time of Louis XIV. she certainly gave well founded alarms upon this subject, (*alarms, which at present require to be transferred to very different quarters.*) But, subsequent to that period, and particularly of late years, having abandoned her schemes of universal monarchy, she has acted a part of jealousy and of intrigue rather than of ambition; she has aimed at the balance more than at the conquest of Europe, and at the preservation of power more than at an increase, or at least more than at any dangerous application, of it. She has indeed pursued pacific objects (such as trade and colonies) by violent means, but this has been more owing to a failure of good sense than to other causes; as is proved by her having struggled more for others

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than for herself, more from negative than from positive views, or else through the influence of a private junto rather than of a public system. For this, less thanks are due to herself, than to the solitary rivalry of Great Britain, and to the terrors inspired into Europe by her former madness. — A few historical circumstances, however, will mark the fact, which is now become of the first magnitude; namely, that she has taken part with the *weak* more generally than with the *strong*. She has protected, for example, since 1763, the Turks against the Russians; she has aided America and the East-Indies against Great Britain; she has opposed (in defiance of family connexions) the ambition of Austria respecting the Scheldt; and she has declined to assist Austria, when seeking to diminish Bavaria, and has only lately favoured an exchange of it for the Low Countries; she has more than once risked herself to assist Spain; and if she lately attempted to gain a fixed sway in Holland, it was at a moment, when we were doing the same, and when (in consequence of the state of parties) Holland was not to be deemed an independent power; (though to have made her *really* such, by a better form of government, would perfectly well have accorded with the French system as well as with our own interests.) In short, France chiefly sought *popularity with Europe*, and at last acquired it; especially as having in several instances observed a *conciliatory* conduct and a peculiar tone of moderation;

ration; and, though she wished to assume a lead in all political arrangements, yet she generally (to the unwarrantable distress of her own subjects) bore more than her share of the expence of them. In the conclusion, the French government became dissolved through the softness of its own principles. — Let us now observe, notwithstanding the difficulty of obtaining an unprejudiced hearing upon this subject, what aspect it is that the present revolution in France bears to what may be called the *foreign affairs of Europe*. And here even the triumvirate must allow, that the popular party at least desire to *see every nation rendered free*; and it will be difficult to deny also, that they wish to abolish wars between nations, and especially a system of conquests; as likewise to establish liberal principles as to citizenship and toleration, and even as to freedom of trade (when their circumstances shall become propitious to it); also to improve every faculty of their country by internal efforts; and to honour and promote, in every respect, the useful arts and sciences. These principles are frequently obscured by intemperance, by intrigue, and other momentary causes; but every person versed in the character and modern writings of the French, especially by means of a recent residence in France, must acknowledge the existence and influence of them; and as to those who would point out the history of Avignon and of the Comtat as contradictory to them, I refer to Poland, Bavaria, the Scheldt, the

Crimea, and even to the present attack upon France, for counter - documents. — I maintain, therefore, that the *present* popular government of the French is far more suited to the preservation of the *independence of nations*\* than the military conspirators in the triumvirate, who certainly are more than upon a par with the modern French in the desire of spreading *their forms of government* over foreign nations ; for, while the one set of these propagators uses the *pen*, the other uses the *sword* ; of which not only Poland at two different periods, but Sweden, Holland, and Liege, exhibit recent and unequivocal examples.

But it will be said here, perhaps, that, allowing the incidental merit of France as contributing to form a *bulwark against ambitious potentates*, yet foreign interference is become necessary to restore it to its proper government and to its means of action. — But, yielding for a moment to this objection, surely it does not mean that the *triumvirate* are the proper parties to be employed either to force or to woo France into the measures necessary to *counteract their own inordinate power and pretensions*. Such a mission, with personages so little disposed to play the humble or the generous part of *sic vos non vobis*, is preposterous. — If foreign

\* Much time and various events occurred between the date of this letter, and the decrees of November and December following, passed by a new Assembly.

assistance, therefore, is necessary to the preservation of the French constitution, we have chosen instruments, whose object will only be to plunder it of a part of its power, and to render null or to debauch the remains of it. Consequently the triumvirate, whether they pretend to coerce or to mediate among the French, are acting in a post where they may do infinite mischief to Europe, and where, therefore, it is our urgent interest to defeat them. — But what then, it will be said, is to be done with France at the present moment? This is a question best to be answered after a short statement of its situation.

The *many* in France are, either by enthusiasm, by interest, by hope, or by fear, on the side of the revolution; or are attached to the indivisibility, to the national independence, and to the glory, of France; or else are persuaded that no free constitution can be expected from those powers who persecute liberty both at *home* and *abroad*, whom solemn recent treaties cannot in the least bind, and who will govern France upon no other principles than those of interest, of resentment, of suspicion, of the sword, and of foreign dependence. The *many* in France are in general led by men originally unknown to the rich and to foreigners, and therefore despised by both; but who are not on this account men the less powerful or active. Their party is supported, in a certain sense, as well by those who are neutral



as by those who differ from them; for, both pay their taxes to them, and co-operate with them upon emergencies for preserving internal order and security. They are already in possession of so much of the government, that it is easy, should treachery ever call for it, to control the rest of it. They cover the soil of France, and are therefore masters of the landed estates of all those who choose to differ from them. They can annually stop the issuing of more than fifteen millions sterling, destined to pay the national engagements, the non-juring clergy, reimbursements of suppressed offices, &c. &c. and they may use the whole amount of it, in case of distress, to support their own cause. In the acting army, they have 100,000 national guards true to them, with all the privates and all the non-commissioned officers of the troops of the line, and a considerable proportion of the commissioned officers. The want of military discipline in their forces is nearly over, or exists more with their officers than with their men; and, as these officers cannot desert twice, if the popular party pass the present crisis, they will possess an army devoted throughout to their principles. As to their number of forces, it is nearly sufficient, or will soon become so; for, independent of reinforcements, as soon as the plan of the enemy for the campaign becomes declared, many of their useless garrisons will be drafted to take the field. The ease with which

which a populous territorial country, and I may now add almost an entirely military one, carries on a *defensive* war upon its frontiers and within it, against an enemy which supports itself from an immense distance, is known from history; and may be remembered also from the resistance which the Turkish frontiers offered during many months against the combined forces of Russia and Austria.— For these and other reasons, which it would be here tedious to enumerate, I am of opinion, that the French will not *in the end* surrender their revolution to foreign armies, filled with descriptions of troops given to plunder, devastation, and cruelty, in a degree which their officers cannot restrain; and whose proceedings therefore, being fully detailed and even exaggerated in newspapers, now read in every corner of France, will exasperate a nation far too great to be intimidated. — As to anarchy or treachery, (which too often have a common source,) great evils of this sort, where intentions are sincere in the many, commonly bring their own remedy; and if the King, therefore, (whose personal safety depends upon his fidelity to the constitution,) were at this moment to choose an able ministry, *suited to the temper of the times*, the face of things would probably instantly change; while, on the other hand, the longer this is delayed, the more will he have to sacrifice. — But, if all these conjectures respecting the fate of France, in her *unassisted* attempts to retain her revolution,

are unfounded, still we shall have to inquire whether a remedy cannot be applied even to *this* evil. — And, in the mean time, I must deprecate the opinion, that it is for our interest to see the triumvirate *wasting itself* in an attack upon France; — for, we must trust nothing to hazard, since France in a state of divided opinions may very possibly prove unable to resist the enemy, when aided by rebels and traitors on one side, and the inactive state of some of her citizens on the other. — In this case, if Great Britain looks to the *then* position of *foreign affairs*, she will find that France being thus confessedly out of the question, the burthen of maintaining the necessary poises of Europe will fall wholly upon herself, as an incessant, expensive, dangerous, and perhaps unavailing care; and that, instead of gaining, she will lose by France being blotted out of the system of Europe. — And even if she looks to France, considered as a *rival*, she will find her in this view emancipated by a bankruptcy from the load of debt which hitherto has always fettered her, and which now operates in some degree as a pledge for pacific systems; and she will find France supported in all her future projects by the triumvirate, to whom she will, by the supposition, by this time have fallen as an appendage. — There is another danger possible to us from the persecuted state of France; which is, that, finding itself become the antipathy of all monarchs,

monarchs, it may in turn reject them all, and found for itself a great republic; which, as being born in arms, may become still more military than the late monarchy, and therefore prove more of a rival to us in our mutual transactions. — But let us now conclude, after all these preliminary reflections, with a few hints as to practice.

Nearly *half* of the most military part of Europe having united, under three neighbouring arbitrary Princes, to dispose of the government, and apparently of the territory, but certainly of the *alliances*, of nearly another *quarter* of it; and the treaty for this purpose being *recently* made with a view to their powerful common interest, and being by its nature incapable of success unless pursued with vigour to the end of it, and in the conduct of it only three *chiefs* being to be consulted; such a treaty I say, being of far more efficacy than ordinary treaties, it remains to be considered, what conduct is to be pursued respecting it by Great Britain; whose population, joined to that of Ireland, forms about one *eleventh* part of that of Europe. — The first observation which presents itself is of a negative nature; namely, that we ourselves ought not to concur, in any degree, in assisting so dangerous an enterprise; and especially too, only upon the call of an ally; (for, as Prussia only acts upon this occasion upon grounds perfectly

fectly open to every power in Europe, if Great Britain has not chosen to come forwards under these principles in a primary character, still less reason is there that she should be implicated in them in a secondary one.) 2°. Another observation, which is also negative, carries us a step farther; for, we may affirm, that it is imprudent (a hint which Ministers will understand\*) to *renounce* all right of interfering respecting the triumvirate and its dependents; and least of all respecting Prussia, who, as being our ally, is in some degree responsible to us. In politics, the infidelity of Princes renders every part of their foreign conduct matter of attention to their neighbours, there being in fact nothing private in politics, except matters of *internal government*. Besides; the ground chosen for such a renunciation is in direct opposition to the menaces used by ourselves, a short time since (in conjunction with *Prussia*), against Russia and Austria, when acting against the Turks. 3°. We ought to prevent, if possible, any new accession to the strength of the triumvirs; either by the junction of Holland to it, or of the German

\* Mr. Chauvelin having about this time desired, that the accession of any more of our allies to the league might be prevented by Great Britain; Lord Grenville answered first, that the independence of foreign Sovereigns was to be respected; and, next, that a peace (a favour that *was not asked* of us) could not be mediated, without the several belligerent parties should themselves manifest a disposition towards it.

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states, or of Spain, Sweden, or other powers; for which purpose little more will be necessary, than a wise and vigorous representation of arguments; and it is impossible that this can come from a more weighty quarter than that of Great Britain; both on account of her present eminent situation, which will give a sort of fashion to her advice; and also, since, from the advice being favourable to France, it carries with it every mark of being disinterested. But, 4°. we ought not only to prevent any addition of strength to the triumvirate, but to endeavour to decompose this mighty mass of mischief. The first party to apply to for this purpose is Prussia; because, we have the most arguments to use there and the most right to employ them; especially, as the ultimate consequence to Prussia, of an union with these powers, may be a future war with both, or at least with one of them; to support her in which, our assistance may be looked to, but necessarily so in vain. Every peril of her situation should, therefore, be announced to her in the most energetic terms; for, what can a puiſſe ally expect from two more powerful, and therefore false, associates? and how can she procure for herself justice, when they choose to disagree with *her*? or, when they disagree with one another, how can she avoid taking part with one of them, to preserve the balance? — Nor should any simulated measures; and much less any wily language, on the  
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part of Prussia, make us forget, that were she even at the outset sincere, yet she has got into company by whom she is exposed to be overreached or seduced at every step; and, consequently, that we have nothing to which to trust for her fidelity but decisive actions not to be revoked. Were she indeed wise, she would be pleased with our affording her an opportunity for treading back her steps, and again returning to her old situation, which was so safe and so easy to be understood; especially, as nothing done in France by a *foreign* force is likely, by the nature of things, to be lasting; nor will the National Assembly be disposed to ratify an inglorious peace, but shew the *inflexibility in times of danger; common to large bodies*; pride (as was exemplified in the Roman Senate, the American Congress, and the Constituent Assembly) being contagious, when each man's presence inspires every other with pretensions and with courage. — Even Austria may be told of the personal danger of the King and Queen of France, with that of their children; and the probability of a consequent utter alienation of France towards itself, in case of accidents; as well as of the dangers arising from the power of Russia, which is becoming so rapidly preponderating, that the peace of Austria, well understood, as well as that of Europe, requires, that a *speedy* (and if possible, a spontaneous) *division of the Russian territories* should take place between the  
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issue of the present Empress. — As to the Empress of Russia, she is of an understanding and temper perfectly capable of entering into dignified and prudent measures, when properly proposed to her. In this great object of representation, therefore, other powers of Europe must be anxiously urged to concur with every possible degree both of zeal and speed; as concerning themselves still more nearly than us; who, by distance, by insular situation, and by strength, are better (though still too little) protected against the danger. 5°. The power of the Turks, now fast extinguishing itself, must, if practicable, to a certain degree be renovated; not by half but by fundamental measures, to be managed through the co-operation of Great Britain and France. The force of states, *ceteris paribus*, depends upon their civil and military institutions; and though it may be difficult to change the Turkish civil institutions, yet a change in their military ones may, perhaps, be more practicable. For instance, as the Turks have sufficient funds, cannot they be engaged to receive twelve or fifteen thousand European infantry and cavalry into their pay, which, when kept united in one corps, may be sufficiently numerous to answer for its own protection: and from such a corps, might not discipline be propagated through other corps of native troops? These or equivalent measures, planned with precaution, and pursued with vigour (however novel), might perhaps be



be successful, and prevent the Russians and Austrians from acquiring a command so critical, as that of the nearest *passages to the East*. Many politicians at one time seemed reconciled to the dismemberment of Turkey, from the hope that humanity would profit by it; but the system of the triumvirate shews, that, without perhaps benefiting Turkey, the measure might be ruinous to Europe. 6°. Every facilitation should be given to the concerns of the Poles and of the French, with respect to arms and other necessaries, and also with respect to Swiss auxiliaries. — And, as to the French, the most generous exertions should be used to procure an union, if possible, of all her citizens in her defence, or at least to obtain the neutrality of the discontented. In this work, also, we should demand the co-operation of others. — As likewise, *Lastly*, in preparing, in case of necessity, to enforce our representations; for, if peaceable arguments shall be found wanting in effect; the dangerous and guilty intentions of the triumvirate will *then become established beyond the possibility of doubt*; and none in that case will be so infatuated, as not to see that they must be vigorously resisted. — As a compensation for these aids afforded to France, there is no doubt that the most advantageous terms might be obtained in the way of a *treaty* from her; and that a foundation might be laid for an oblivion of all past enmities, and for a mutually pacific, and even beneficial, conduct in future.

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The *variation of system* here proposed, with regard to France, will not be attributable to Great Britain, but to those who have created the *necessity* for it; for, a change of enemies must naturally cause a change of interests, and therefore of allies. This cannot be new in politics. Accordingly, since 1756, there is not one active power of Europe, which has not shifted its principal ally more than once, and some twice, or oftener.—Contest for minor objects are highly criminal; but, if we did right, lately, in countenancing the German league formed against Austria; and if formerly the wars about successions, as well as the wars for the Protestant interest, and those for the balance of power, (or, in other words, for the liberties and independence of European nations,) were any of them defensible; surely the present is more than a parallel occasion, as comprehending the motives of all of them.—But remonstrance alone will be necessary upon this occasion, and by no means war.—In the mean time, it must be observed, that we have no concern in all this with the democratic principles of France; nor do we at all take into question its internal government, farther than to seek by friendly means to restore to it its unity; and thus to enable it to resume its post as one of the protectors of Europe against the return of that *universal monarchy* in others, which it knows by experience that it can neither acquire or retain for itself.—Others may bestow what reproaches they please upon the Constitution

stitution of France; but this is not the place to discuss them, as we are speaking of national and not of domestic politics, of foreign and not of home concerns: but if the Revolution of France be really an evil, still it becomes us to extract all the good out of it which circumstances permit; for, if we wish to avoid Scylla, we must still remember that there is a danger in Charybdis.—A little effort used at present, therefore, will unite the western against the eastern side of Europe, and by so doing may save much future trouble.—But it is indispensable that the Austrians and Prussians should evacuate France, even for the sake of the quiet of France itself; for, it is *their* approach which has caused the present ferment of parties in it; and, as we cannot answer for the conduct of the triumvirs, nor they indeed for their own, we should take care, as they are not likely to do good, that they do no harm.—But how inconsistent is it to suppose that the same parties, who, in spite of a treaty, enter Poland on the east, with the design of dethroning an innocent king, dissolving a cherished government, and dividing a territory to which they have no pretension; should enter France to the westward, with the opposite motive of fortifying the throne, organizing a constitution, and preventing the dismemberment of the country, notwithstanding one of the invaders has ancient claims to a very large district of it.—What indeed must the principles of those potentates

tates be, to go no farther, who in a whole nation see but a single man?

Since much depends upon the conduct of France *within itself*, and this paper will perhaps be read by some in that country, I presume respectfully to direct a word or two to their attention.—It appears, that the present divisions of France have chiefly become important from a single fundamental cause, namely, the approach of an enemy officiously pretending to unite them. In this state of things, luke-warm ministers had neglected to provide a sufficiency of muskets, clothing, and recruits, for the army; many suspicious persons were also promoted, or else were suffered to remain in every department, particularly in the military and in the foreign; next, the naval system was all but annihilated; certain incidents likewise about the court, to which I shall not farther allude, gave symptoms of evil counsellors existing in its neighbourhood; and, lastly, the obstinacy of the aristocracy appeared to be demonstrated from the number of military men, slightly taking and slightly breaking the civic oath, and from many ecclesiastical persons more honourably not taking it at all.—The danger thus becoming pressing, the popular party exclaimed, that they were betrayed, and insisted upon ministers in whom they could confide. The rigid constitutionalists, on the other hand, asserted that the King was privileged as to his choice: but the popular party, contending that

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the letter of the constitution ought not to destroy its spirit, sought an opportunity either of adding to the constitution, or else of superseding a part of it, as a matter not only warranted by the public safety, but called for by the public voice.—In this state of things, what can be the natural remedy (as before-mentioned) besides an honest but *popular* ministry? I hope that this remedy will not be applied too late; and that the King will have the firmness to adopt it cheerfully. He has certainly excellent intentions; and, after having deliberately adopted the constitution, he will doubtless adhere to it; recollecting those noble words of his predecessor, John of France, when returning to his captivity, unable to release himself from the conditions of it: “ If  
 “ truth and justice (said he) are banished from the  
 “ earth, the last place, in which they ought to be  
 “ found, is in the mouths and in the hearts of  
 “ princes.” The present is no longer the time for indecisive measures. Too much is done by the King, for any of it to be retracted. His person is in hazard; and even if his person were safe, the Austrians and Prussians, in case of final victory, would only use him for their own advantage, rob him of a part of his territory, depopulate the rest of it, or leave in it the seed of eternal revolt and civil war. Let him then join his people, and drive out the enemy.—Some most respectable constitutionalists have lately unfortunately compromised themselves upon several occasions, and upon some  
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where men might fairly have been of two opinions; but the virtue of their intentions being universally known to Europe, their merit will soon be re-acknowledged in France, and perhaps by a speedy act of oblivion; for, it is impossible to think that such men can mean to sheath a parricide sword in the bowels of their country. They will soon perceive that the disorders of France are to be treated not by a hot but by a cool regimen, and that they require time rather than an exasperating opposition. They will never sacrifice the reputation of their past lives, or even that acquired during the revolution, by a peevish conduct; but, possessed of true magnanimity, they will patiently look for a settlement of things to the good sense of France itself, which (*after the example of America*) may succeed in two or three years in a second attempt at good government, even if it fails at present in the first. In short, they will never consign France, on account of their personal feelings or even of their personal interests (both of which good men will sacrifice to their country) to an interminable scene of discord and woe, in consequence of a long foreign and civil war, in which more mischief may be done in a single hour, and be again and again repeated, than has yet occurred through the whole French revolution. In short, they will never be so devoid of sense and foresight, as to concur with the armies of two powers, of which one has a sort of *title* to be the enemy of France as being the ancient claimant

of its territory, and both of which have recently disclaimed all those principles by which they can pretend to prove themselves its friends. How happy is it, that the fate of Poland has been *twice* exhibited, to open the eyes of France, *before the commencement of its own struggle!*—But, if sacrifices are expected on one side in France, improvements ought to be made on the other; particularly with regard to the *dignity of the Assembly*, which is daily committed in a manner so excessively impolitic and disgusting, that it is impossible that it can be useful to any party, except that which intends the public ruin, and which is sold to the enemy, either domestic or foreign.—As to those, who wish a change of the *reigning dynasty*, I hope they are too few to require to be addressed, especially if the King acts with an early decision towards the public.—With respect to the *republican* party, let them have the goodness to reflect on the following brief hints. In France, republicanism has many violent opponents; in France, there is, however, a temper established, which will not long tolerate a bad king. As far as economy is concerned, the expences of a king are less than those of a war, civil and foreign. Surely, then, it cannot be worth risking every thing, and, in any event, throwing every thing into confusion, for the mere *difference of happiness* (for this is all which is at stake) between a republic and a well organized monarchy. Europe, likewise, has now heard *enough of theoretical principles,*

*ples*, perhaps enough to doubt of the value of them ; and therefore, in order to aid its conviction, it now requires to see a little of *examples* ; so that it is incumbent to give it an example (in *that* country which has the best opportunity,) both of the practicability and of the blessings of a free government, particularly as to internal improvements. It is surely inconsistent in those, who pretend to have nothing in view but the happiness of man, and who boast that there is a fraternity to be observed between nations, not to consider the sufferings of *other* nations ; whose cause has lost much more by the late extravagant conduct of French patriots, than it gained by the first impulse from the French revolution ; reforms, in general, for example, being now dreaded, not only by princes, but by *nations themselves* ; for to the late exaggerated conduct of the French is owing the rejection of all reform in England, as well as the severity of certain late restrictions imposed in foreign countries, with the new attack upon Poland, and the actual invasion of France itself. If the only result, therefore, of pushing this question at present, is to put all reforms to risk throughout Europe, and to make a few men rash to their own cost, and more men timid to the public injury ; it appears the dictate both of wisdom and benevolence to render the *more valuable part* of the revolution secure, and to leave all refinements of it to the future operation of *general* opinion, instead of resort-



ing to forced and hazardous intrigues. The constitution of France has about it both a name and sufficient merits to render it a point for rallying, and, in short, the pole-star for all; whereas, allowing the value of a republican government to be as great as is ascribed to it by its favourers, it must be remembered, that there are different forms of it, and that even among its favourers no form is yet fairly agreed upon, and that, even when agreed upon, it will require time to establish it in practice.

Let me now end this long political discussion with two remarks, by way of retrospect to it.—First, I desire to be considered throughout, as wishing not to use the style of prophecy more than is fitting. Where men must act, they must endeavour to anticipate, and they may be deceived in doing it; but the reasoning I have used, as to the Concert of Princes, admits of wide limits; for, I have not found it necessary to argue so much on what is *probable*, as on what is *possible*; and I have done so necessarily; since, as a wise man used to observe, “Politicians act commonly with so little system, that it becomes difficult at any period to say what will be their next measure.”

The other remark regards my own personal politics; and here I beg to lay claim to the observance of a strict neutrality.—If I am asked, therefore, what I think of the late measures of our Administration as to Russia? I answer, that I have  
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always conceived that Russia was useful to us by her trade, but dangerous to us by her power, and often so by her politics; that the ministry were in general right in opposing Russian politics, but chose a wrong moment for it, after Sweden had quitted the contest; that they struggled at the peace about an inadequate object; and did not afterwards seem to defend their proceedings upon grounds sufficiently extensive.

I here then take my leave of the public, trusting that I have made it clear with respect to their interest, that the good understanding of the triumvirs with one another is dangerous to the peace of Europe, which requires for its safety the existence of many equal and disconnected powers; and that I have also proved, with respect to myself, that, although I have manifested warm feelings, I am yet

*A CALM OBSERVER.*

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### L E T T E R III.

*THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.*

*Published August 2, 1792.*

S I R,

**I**T is not with apologies for inaccuracies, either of style or of the transcriber's pen, that I shall trouble you, particularly as a republication of these

letters will shortly appear; but it is my duty to state, that haste has caused me to *omit* some essential observations. One or two shall now be mentioned; — but I shall first remark, that a little time will soon remove all doubts as to the statement I have made of the population belonging to the powers combined against Poland and France, under the name of the *Concert of Sovereigns*; a name of itself sufficient to excite alarm, both as implying novelty in our times, and that Sovereigns are every thing, and their people nothing.

Sardinia, like a smaller stream, that lends its aid to swell devouring torrents, is now preparing to reinforce the triumvirate of Russia, Austria, and Prussia; and to raise the number of their dependents, in the minds even of scrupulous politicians, to the full complement of sixty millions of souls. — The subtle power just mentioned has always pursued an ambitious system under its different Princes. Imitating a crafty vulture, it has constantly descended from its post upon the hills into the plain, whenever the moving camps of warriors have promised any prey to it. Its share of this has generally been considerable, and it will not at present be at all the less for being extracted out of an ally. — I shall offer several important remarks upon the consequences of this event, should it take place. 1<sup>o</sup>. Any addition made to Sardinia out of France, when joined to a farther defalcation  
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in favour of Austria, will cut off a complete border from the whole *Eastern* territory of France ; which will not only considerably lessen the French domain, but as considerably add to the territories of powers already too formidable. 2°. It is perhaps of still more importance to remember, that such a change will strip France of its present excellent frontier to the East, consisting of mountains, rivers, and fortresses ; all which may be transferred to the common enemies of itself and of Great Britain, so as to leave France hereafter more tempted to join than to oppose the Concert of Princes ; or, in any event, more incapable both of offensive and defensive operations respecting it. (The importance of a guarded frontier is easily made apparent, by considering what would be the situation of the British empire, in its present *internal* defenceless state, if Great Britain and Ireland were, by a miracle, suddenly to be made contiguous to a hostile continent, by the disappearance of our rampart of sea and of navy.) 3°. It is of considerable consequence to remark, that, to render Sardinia in any degree stronger than it is at present, will be to render Switzerland, Italy, and the smaller German States, in a like proportion weaker ; and thence to open new changes to the balance of Europe ; besides the danger arising from the possible appearance of a new *naval* power in Sardinia. 4°. Whether it is proper for England to wish to restore the family of Count d'Artois to the line of the French succession,

cession, when the throne of France may *thence* be joined at some period or other with the hereditary possession of Sardinia, I shall not here inquire ; but none can deny, that every addition to Sardinia taken from Switzerland, Italy, or Germany, will, in *such* an event, become an addition to the power of France ; and therefore be inconsistent with our jealousy of that country. — I shall take my leave of Sardinia with *one other* observation. Who is there, that, viewing things with the eye of humanity, can wish Switzerland, for example, to be wrested from its own self-government, and placed under the rule of Sardinia ; whose subjects, and even whose Ministers, are kept with the strictness of boys in their schooling hours ; and with whom military oppressions, and crowds of melancholy ecclesiastics, form an odious compound of political and clerical tyranny ? — Let us next say a few words respecting *Prussia* and Poland.

The natural policy of *Prussia* was evidently to adhere to the German league which she herself had formed ; as likewise to re-establish Poland, and to concur in the reversionary gift of it to Saxony ; and, lastly, to separate rather than to unite Russia and Austria, to give also a certain degree of strength and system to the Turks, and to re-instate France upon principles adverse to Austria and friendly to herself. — Much of this was already in train ; but *Prussia* chose to quit a safe system, in which she bore the lead, for a perilous and intricate one, where  
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her part is *subordinate*, and, at the same time, contrary both to her engagements and to consistency. But, unhappily, conquests seemed to glitter in her new course; and, perhaps, the prospect flattered her the more, as it gave her ample room for intrigue. — Let us recite some of her intrigues. She checked a negociation between Poland and the Turks; and, in this, injured *two of her natural* allies. Upon condition of receiving an equivalent out of Austria, she consented that Austria should pillage the Turks; which amounted to a pillage of Turkey by her own hands. — She pretended to negotiate a Commercial Treaty with Poland, (her observance of which would be in her own breast;) but she required it to be accompanied by the cession of Dantzic and Thorn; which, being refused, she retracted the demand, and suffered the treaty to die away. Poland was on the point of making arrangements with Russia; but Prussia checked the progress of them, under the pretence of aiding her in her new Constitution, and of protecting her by the false pledge of her *own* alliance. She raised the hopes of Saxony, also, with respect to Poland, and then disappointed them. — She employed Great Britain to recommend to Poland the cession of Dantzic and Thorn, whereby we became suspected to Poland; and she lately made use of us to threaten Russia, but *suffered it to be understood*, that we acted herein the part of a principal against Russia, rather than at her request. — I am justified, therefore, when

when I say, that Prussia proceeds upon a system weak with respect to herself, and hazardous towards her allies; and that, if she persists in it, she may be a source of weakness rather than of strength to us.

It is difficult to explain the conduct of Prussia upon any prudent ground, except that of her fear of suffering from the too strict union of Poland and Saxony; who might thence be supposed to hold the sheers, capable, at some future period, of cutting the thread of her own destiny. — But has she avoided danger by placing herself between Russia and Austria? and will not Prussia and Sardinia, the two *junior kingdoms* in Europe, have reason to rue the success of the only two *imperial*, and, therefore, the proudest, potentates in Europe? and will not this ill-matched alliance be likely to meet the fate which commonly attends *unequal friendships*, whether in public or in private life? Will not both of these smaller powers only be suffered to fatten, previous to their slaughter? — But might not Prussia have pacified her fears as to the danger alluded to, by alliances in other parts; or by family-connections with the Saxon dynasty, which might have united the two crowns in one common issue; or by a solemn treaty with Poland, which, as being *national*, rather than personal, might have stood a better chance of being observed, especially as being bottomed upon common interests; or, lastly, by negotiating an exchange of the Saxon dominions

dominions for some of the Eastern parts of those of Prussia; (who, if she had by this means transferred *Silesia*, with its disputed title, to the Saxon family, might have got rid of the burthen of maintaining the validity of her claims over it?) — But, as there was no danger more pressing or of greater magnitude than that on the side of Russia and Austria, so there was no danger which required more decisive measures to be taken, in spite of trifling future hazards. — In any event, however, there was no part which could be *less safe*, than for a king, with so few resources as the Prussian monarch, to be running about the Low Countries and France, with Prussia, as it were, on his back: an experiment, which, one would have thought, had proved sufficiently fatal in the hands of Charles XII. of Sweden, and of the Athenians when attacking Sicily, to be a warning against its repetition by Prussia.

But, whatever is the part which might have been *wisest for Prussia* to have adopted, it is enough that the step which she has taken is sufficiently unadvisable and hazardous, for *us* to insist upon her abandoning either *that* or our alliance. — I should not do justice to my own feelings if I suffered it to be suspected, that I undervalued the Prussian connection. While the ambition of princes remains predominant over their sense of duty and their judgment, alliances may, to a certain degree, be useful to us, if concluded with prudent powers, having a common interest



terest with us; but if Prussia will change, by her proceedings, the whole tablet of Europe, and persist, in spite of the remonstrances which ought to be made to her, in plunging herself into disputes, which may eventually ruin her; it seems self-evident that it will not be wise for us to risk *an actual* war, for the sake of an ally to assist us in a *future* war, when the return of the favour is made so very problematical. — Besides, Prussia ought to state our requisition upon this occasion, as a fair excuse to Austria for abandoning her present enterprises. — Nor is there any thing in her *ostensible* engagements, as a party in the Concert of Princes, which can make this measure difficult. Austria has confessed, that the subject of the indemnities due to the smaller German powers was matter of easy compromise; which must hold no less true of those due to the Pope. Nothing, then, would remain but the cause of the *crown* or *King* of France; but, if I am right, that it is in the power of ourselves and Prussia to incline the king of France to choose a *popular* ministry, the whole pretence for foreign hostile interference would cease. — It is easy to prove this; for, the popular party in France have proceeded upon two data, simple in themselves, but which render consequent their whole conduct; the first of which is, that they have a right to save their constitution by means existing in or even out of it, and, secondly, that the King of France has persons about him, who give cause to suspect; that the

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the executive power will not co-operate with them. A popular administration, then, obviates every difficulty, by removing every suspicion and admitting every exertion! especially, if, at the same time, England produced a cessation of hostilities, which her extreme influence through Europe would render easy; and thus place her upon a very deserved eminence of popularity, both with France and with Europe, from which she might derive the highest advantages. — A moment, however, is not to be lost, as things may assume very rapidly a direction and impulse, which we may not be able to obviate or redress. — And would the emperor stand alone against France and the rest of us united? Would he persist in *insulting* the King of France, by accusing him of falsehood, in his declarations of *assent* (for I need not call it *choice*) in favour of the Constitution? — Would not the Concert of Princes fall to the ground, *ipso facto*; and would not Poland, in consequence, again be restored to itself and to happiness; and Prussia once more be a power affectionately embraced, both on public and family accounts, by the British nation.

But this fond prospect must not seduce us from saying one or two parting words as to *Poland*. For this end I shall remind the public that the first division of Poland happened, as the King of Prussia relates in his posthumous works, merely from the desire of finding a cession *suited to Russia*, which might

might give less umbrage to Austria than the cessions required from the Turks. — A *casual* incident led the triumvirate of the day to think of hapless Poland; and Poland was instantly made the meal to glut the appetite, not only of Russia, who was the claimant, but also of Austria and Prussia, who were the mediators. As I shall, at an early day, give an account of this shameless transaction, in the *words* of the late King of Prussia, I pass on to a second and concluding remark. — A voluntary subscription is proposed among us in favour of Poland, similar to that in favour of Corsica; (of Corsica, which has only a seventieth part of its population, which certainly was not more unjustly persecuted, and whose fate had far less influence upon human affairs.) Every individual has an easy mode now offered of bearing testimony in his own person to distressed merit, of assisting it by his purse, of discountenancing persecution by the weight of his name, and of shewing to princes, that, let them concert in what manner they please, there is a public existing, whose imposing and dignified majority it will become them to respect. Should the succour prove too late to be useful in the *field*, the sanction, given by respectable men to the undertaking, will assist the fate of Poland in the negotiation which must follow. It is not every day that private men can do good to nations; or have the satisfaction, when doing it, of thinking that it must indirectly contribute to the safety of their own country. In  
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short, there is no way in which a man can render more benefit to Europe and mankind in a private station, than by lending his aid, however small, to the cause of a suffering Cato, and of the nation which he is endeavouring to train up in peace, in virtue, and in happiness.

A CALM OBSERVER.

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L E T T E R IV.

*On the Duke of Brunswick's Manifesto, with an Address to Louis XVI.*

*Published August 6, 1792.*

S I R,

THE indignation of mankind will at last rise to a pitch which armies cannot quell. — The *declaration, made by the Duke of Brunswick*, in the name of Austria and Prussia, against France, portends death to all its inhabitants (except regular troops) who offer obstacles to their forces. And what is their alleged object? The adjustment of the claims of the parties dispossessed in the German provinces of France, and the cessation of

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anarchy.

anarchy. — As the emperor, however, four weeks ago, solemnly declared, that the first object little concerned him, and was also susceptible of easy arrangement, I shall, after his example, lay it out of the question.

The whole then respects *the order of things* in France. — But, as the pretence of these pious princes, in favour of a *religion* which is not professed by the King of Prussia or by the Empress of Russia, and the coffers of which have been pillaged, and its pretended rights invaded by the house of Austria, carries with it its own refutation; — I shall only touch upon the designs of a *political* nature, announced respecting France, and the means to be employed for their execution.

The political design announced is to restore, to absolute power, the French king; who, in more than ten passages of a short manifesto, is made the sole fountain of authority; the allies expressly acknowledging no laws whatever in France, but those flowing from *him*. They speak, indeed, of his promises, in favour of the happiness of his subjects; and suppose it possible that he may convene certain bodies near him; but of what nature, they say, depends entirely upon himself; adding, in another place, that they shall not intermeddle in the interior government of France. — Such is their benevolent and philosophic end.

Their means, which are corresponding, are fire and sword. — If the militia, or national guards, oppose

oppose them, they are to receive the punishment of rebellion; which is the more remarkable, as half the King of Prussia's forces, according to Hertsberg, are of this description. If the inhabitants at large dare defend themselves, whether in the field or under cover, they are to suffer instant military punishment, and their houses to be destroyed. The administrative bodies are made personally responsible for all violences which they do not notoriously oppose. All the members of the National Assembly, and of the administrative bodies and national guard, at Paris, are to answer with their lives for all accidents to the king, queen, and royal family; and, in case of any such accident, or even of the denial of permission to their going where they please, an exemplary and never-to-be-forgotten vengeance is to follow; and the city of Paris is to be delivered up to military execution, and even to total subversion. — Of the rights and liberties of citizens, these potentates take no concern; for "*subjects*," they say, "are bound to their sovereigns by the law of nature and of nations:" of *nature*, though, in a state of nature, kings are unknown; and of *nations*, though national law only regulates the concerns between nations; which, therefore, would be a solecism in political ethics, were correctness to be expected from princes, who do not study the rights of men to preserve them, but only to know how to control them. — It is another matter also of criticism, to observe tyrants perpetually

tually insisting upon the necessity of princes being at *liberty*, and of their subjects being *disarmed*, before the former can be bound by any oath to any constitution; and yet to find them requiring obedience from a nation towards its prince, as of right, though exacted by force from disarmed and helpless citizens. Surely this is setting *mutual* compact wholly at defiance, and implying that nations are made for princes, and not princes for nations.

If the French have only awakened from their sleep of despotism, in order that, after a momentary trance in the arms of liberty, they may again sink into oppression, loaded with redoubled chains; it is hard to say, whether they deserve most of contempt or of pity. France has imbibed so much of a sense of liberty; that nothing but a tyranny within, re-enforced by a tyranny from without, can seem safe or satisfactory to those who seek to become its masters. — It never, then, can be possible for a Fayette, or a Rochefoucauld, to be driven by democratic petulance to embrace so foul a monster, presented to them without the slightest disguise. They will rather trust the chance of returning sense in their own countrymen, or, if it were necessary, try a republic with all its hazards (and I allow them great, though, happily, needless to be incurred) than look for security and liberty to spring out of the tender mercies of military tyranny. — The discontented constitutionalists are most of them *respectable, well-intentioned men*; lovers of their country, and capable

ble of sacrificing their petty wrongs at its shrine ; as well as of uniting to preserve it from immediate horrors from without, and of depending, with a generous confidence, upon the approaching constitutional renewal of the legislature for redress of what is wrong within. — The allies, therefore, will be foiled. They will, indeed, unite France, but it will be against themselves ; they will extinguish anarchy, only to revive a constitution ; and they will restore an order to it, which will be opposed to their own injustice. This is sure prophecy, for it is the voice of history.

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The manifesto *disclaims* all design of dismembering France ; but, as the language of a manifesto is always such as will best ensure its success, it never imposes upon any but weak persons ; and those must be weak *indeed* who give much credence to it, after recollecting that the Empress of Russia, who originally pledged herself for the indivisibility of Poland, is now about to tear it into pieces a second time. — But, if we grant that the allies are *sincere in renouncing conquests upon France*, there needs little foresight then to know, that the invasion of France will soon terminate with the first obstacle ; that the French king will be complimented with the pretended merit of having opposed it ; and that the allies will retire to solace themselves with their projected booty



in Poland, or other quarters. It is unnatural, that German powers, who, like the Swifs, never move but for profit; can have engaged in a war without counting its cost, and without making sure of their indemnity; and it is impossible that powers, like Austria and Prussia, (which never see their rivals acquire a pound of earth or a single subject without alarm,) can have viewed the progress of the Russians in Poland with so much *sang froid* and complacency, without terms having been definitively concluded between them respecting it. Upon the supposition, therefore, that designs upon the territory of France *are* to be abandoned, Poland, or some other possession, it is obvious to conceive, will be the “pillow upon which they will rest their “disappointments;” — and the supposition of such abandonment is certainly rendered colourable when we observe the unmanaged and disgusting terms of the manifesto, the tranquillity with which the French nation attend their enemy, as well as the little deference shewn by the allies to the French emigrants. To these considerations let us add the known spirit of intrigue of one of the allies, who cannot well be supposed sincere in wishing to drive back France, by force, into its old alliance with its rival; and, likewise, the probable anxiety of each of the allies, now employed against France, to inspect the critical transactions passing in Poland. — As to Poland, he must be a young politician indeed who can suspect, that a triumvirate, which has once dissected Poland,

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can have any delicacy about repeating an operation which has paid it so well. The Empress and Prince Kaunitz still *continue* to govern Russia and Austria; and Prussia, by its abandonment of Poland, has shewn, that the present monarch will not be more scrupulous than the last. — Besides, to the motives of the first division, are added others, which call for a second. I mean, the removal of a benevolent sovereign from the Polish throne, who seeks to govern his nation in a manner so much more popular than these princes, as to form a dangerous example in their neighbourhood; and who, by strengthening his nation, has probably caused a jealousy, lest it should seek to reclaim its former possessions; not to omit, that, as a war has been thought advisable to be risked against France, it may be proposed to make one kingdom furnish the funds for a crusade against the other.

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But whatever may be the motives or designs of the triumvirs is of little consequence to France or to Great Britain, each of whom must *provide* for the worst, lest the worst should happen. — France must remember, that military despotism, when once established, has no control left to it, but its *own* sense of justice; and that this sense of justice is constantly weakened by the extension of its power. — And Great Britain must recollect,

that the triumvirs are in too good an understanding with one another for herself to be safe, while it is so easy for them, after abandoning all projects upon France, to quarter themselves not only upon Poland, in their centre, but upon Turkey to the right, and upon Germany to the left,

As to *individuals in France*, who wish to choose their political principles upon *mere speculation*, we may observe to them, that the allies either are or are not sincere in their joint manifesto.—If either of the allies, and still more if both of them, are *insincere* in it, which, from its extravagance (so unworthy of grave men) and from other circumstances, is more than possible; the decision becomes clear.—If, on the other hand, the allies *are* in earnest; those are not wise men who range themselves on the side of so much folly. The French never will hear with patience from mercenaries, who fight *without any opinions*, that well-intentioned men are to be punished with death for *defending theirs*. Nor is it in the chance of things, that 150,000 acting troops can conquer 300,000 acting or local ones, occupying fortified posts, and perpetually augmenting their numbers, if the latter are but true to their cause.—If the allies loiter on the frontiers, France is safe by delay;—if they undertake a course of sieges, in that case autumnal sickness, resistance, or even a success which calls for garrisons to secure their conquests, will equally

qually disable their progress, till winter brings its protection; and if they advance at all hazards, with an enemy in front, in flank, and in rear, and leave no way open for their supplies except what depends upon convoys, while the enemy can every where assemble forces for *attack*, and every where take shelter in fortifications for *defence*, their distress is no less certain. An army which is obliged to *double* the strength of its detachments, when it either occupies a post, or sends out parties for convoys or to forage, on account of the known or *possible* hostility of a military country, will soon be harassed and broken down; and the havoc which will be made in the pursuit of every corps which is defeated, where every townsman, every peasant, and almost every woman, is an armed enemy, will be another dreadful contingency. Xenophon himself, if leading 100,000 men, would find it difficult to *retreat* from such a country, though every step would bring him nearer home; but how he would *advance* in it, even with 150,000 men, when every step lengthened his communications, and augmented both his enemies and his employment for his own troops, I leave to the Duke of Brunswick to answer. — To those who *deny* the hostility of the country, I reply, that a cautious general must always reckon upon it, till he finds proof to the contrary; and he has too sure ground for doing so, when he sees, that with only 15,000 regular troops left in the interior parts of France, rebellion at present is  
no

no where able to keep its standard flying. But if France is to be deemed only as *neutral*, the enemy, at least, will have no *aid* to hope from it; especially as persons, who do not engage in a civil war upon its original principles in the commencement of it, are generally sooner or later induced to take part in it upon secondary ones; and the sanguinary orders issued through the Duke of Brunswick (which will be executed to the full letter of them by German free-booters, as far as their power goes) will not leave them long undecided.—I know indeed that great accumulations of force to the allies, and great desertions from the popular army are expected; as the war proceeds; as well as great disasters to the latter from treachery, and from want of discipline. But, first, as to accessions of force, they may happen on both sides. Next, respecting desertions; the French, at present, experience few, except among their officers, and these are lessening; and it remains to be seen, whether the stream of desertion will not turn its course, when the victims of *military and civil* tyranny among the Germans are better acquainted with facts, and find opportunities for escaping, especially should they receive any check in their enterprizes.\* With regard to experience, more of it is acquired in six weeks, in the presence of an enemy, than in six years in barracks;

\* The French afterwards published premiums to invite desertion.

and a defensive system will naturally prolong its opportunities.—The whole, then, for the present, centers in the single question of *treachery*, which I acknowledge there is reason in some instances to apprehend; but time will discover men's characters; and we must remember, that many officers have a peculiar interest in the present order of things, as having acquired unexpected promotion (even from the lowest ranks) by the desertion of their superiors. Besides; the enthusiastic conduct of privates and non-commissioned officers has been proved under the most discouraging circumstances; and, *whenever a great army holds together*, trusty officers will not be wanting, fond of obtaining commands in it. Add to this, that the *worst* which the allies can do will soon be known; and that the first pause in their progress will announce their ruin and confirm every man's fidelity.—The whole then stands in a short compass, as follows. Since the German powers, from the expence of the war, and their little interest in it, will not support it long; since, whenever they retire, the kingdom will resume its opinions; and since, even while they are supposed to be masters, great masses of people must always obtain an amnesty from them; the question is, whether it is better for a prudent Frenchman to side with his nation, (which in some shape or other must soon acquire order,) and thus to secure property and situation; or to abandon every thing at home,

home, for a party, which must be without resource and become vagrant, if defeated; and which, if it succeeds for the moment, will always have its battles to fight over again? — If the first measure of joining the nation is not adopted, it will at least appear, that *neutrality* is better than the second measure, of joining its enemies.

But a *great personage* is still unmentioned, whose post is of the highest importance both to himself and others; I mean the King of France: for whose cause I have long combated in private with a zeal, which, were I near him, would entitle me to address him in the following words: —

“ Sire, it is by hearing truth, that you can alone  
 “ be saved from ruin to your person, your family,  
 “ and your throne. There are two truths, then, of  
 “ the utmost importance for you to know: the  
 “ first is, that your nation prefers *things* to *men*;  
 “ and, the next, that, in a time of crisis, *nothing* will  
 “ be trusted to *that is doubtful*. Unfortunately,  
 “ the persons, who are to judge of you, are those,  
 “ who were chosen deputies at the moment of fever,  
 “ which was occasioned by your endeavour  
 “ to escape. These persons have seen the new oaths  
 “ daily taken, and daily broken, by your officers;  
 “ and they fear, that the Pope and your Clergy  
 “ may be used to explain away your own. They  
 “ suspect your wife (and it is unfortunate when the  
 “ wife of Cæsar is suspected): they suspect her, I  
 “ say, of Austrian attachments. *Her* relations, and  
 “ those

“ those of yourself and of your attendants, fill the  
 “ camp of the public enemy. — Under circum-  
 “ stances like these, that Assembly, which has most  
 “ weight with the nation, has little confidence in  
 “ your ministers; and your ministers of late, to say  
 “ the least of them, have not only failed in every  
 “ thing, but have pursued an equivocal conduct;  
 “ and, in times of crisis, *doubt will not be suffered to*  
 “ *exist*. The constitution tells you, that you may  
 “ choose your ministers; but the spirit which made  
 “ that constitution says, that the constitution must  
 “ be rendered safe, when a public enemy is upon  
 “ its march to destroy it. If you do not, therefore,  
 “ give to the Assembly and the public the minis-  
 “ try which they require, they will have a king and  
 “ ministry of their own, and make their prefe-  
 “ rence for *men* and for *things* coincide. — What  
 “ more to distress them could happen, than does  
 “ happen, if you were against them; and, if you  
 “ and your son were assassinated, would it not be  
 “ in vain that your friends would seek to replace  
 “ either of you on your throne? — The same con-  
 “ test, in either case, would remain for the popular  
 “ party, but their conduct of the contest would  
 “ become easier.

“ Alas, Sire, your warmest friends are those  
 “ who most deceive and injure. They talk of  
 “ your wrongs, and of a resentful nation; but *great*  
 “ *objects are only to be known by great signs*, and  
 “ history alone is to be used to interpret these signs.

“ The



“ The affectionate, or perhaps the interested, state-  
 “ ments of those who surround you, are inaccur-  
 “ rate upon this subject, since France is now ma-  
 “ naged by the *majority* of its *active* men, (for,  
 “ whether they are rich or not is of no moment,  
 “ since, when the minds of men are agitated,  
 “ numbers always control property;) and, being  
 “ thus self-governed, what has France done to  
 “ resent the events of the 20th of June? Dis-  
 “ trust, Sire, the cold attachment, which waits to  
 “ declare itself under the shelter of an army; for  
 “ there are armies on *both* sides. — Trace back ra-  
 “ ther the *history* of your danger; and you will  
 “ see in it both its causes and its cure. At the  
 “ commencement of this Assembly, a tendency to  
 “ republicanism revolted the nation; but, when  
 “ the house of Austria thought to aid this senti-  
 “ ment, by throwing out some ill-judged threats,  
 “ they irritated, instead of alarming, that nation,  
 “ and foreign affairs soon became embroiled. —  
 “ With the *public* danger, commenced *your own*.  
 “ From that instant, all has been suspicion, strug-  
 “ gle, and confusion; the public without has been  
 “ called to take part with the popular men with-  
 “ in the Assembly; and every step is using to  
 “ prove to the nation the necessity of a new insur-  
 “ rection, a new royal family, or a new consti-  
 “ tution, or at least of some equivalent provi-  
 “ sional measures. — This is the *cause* of  
 “ the mischief; and the *remedy* is very brief.

“ A

" A ministry represents the executive power, (as  
 " the Assembly does the people;) and a ministry  
 " must be chosen, which will be acceptable to the  
 " Assembly, and tolerated by the nation. I know  
 " nothing of your ministers — of those that were;  
 " or that are, or that are to be; but I consider  
 " your interests and those of human kind. You  
 " will fall unpitied, if you attempt any new line of  
 " politics; while ill-treatment, under a consistent  
 " conduct, will render you respected, whatever be  
 " the event: and if a popular ministry for a time  
 " invade your rights, as the nation is concerned in  
 " these as well as yourself, times of quiet will restore  
 " them either to yourself or to your son, — The  
 " measure of which I speak is alone *fundamental*;  
 " and if there are any risks about it, they are such  
 " as must be encountered. All minor sacrifices and  
 " every thing short of this will be useless. If de-  
 " ferred, every day will accustom one side to more  
 " and greater violences, and the other side to a  
 " more established helplessness and despair. — But,  
 " above all things, Sire, beware of considering the  
 " *public enemy* as your *own ally*. You alone are  
 " made the pretext of their invasion. Repel then  
 " the base imputations they cast upon your sincer-  
 " ity, and bid them retire in a way in which they  
 " cannot misunderstand you — But be cautious of  
 " one mistake. The temper of no *nation* in Eu-  
 " rope now inclines to offensive alliance: these are  
 " the passion of princes only; your nation there-  
 " fore

" fore will only consent to a *defensive* alliance with  
 " Austria; and this you may conclude to-morrow,  
 " with a treaty of commerce in addition. — If  
 " you think that the Austrians and Prussians will  
 " conquer, because uninstructed persons tell you so,  
 " again look back to history, to correct their error  
 " by your own judgment. In the cases of Greece,  
 " Rome, Switzerland, England, Holland, Corsica,  
 " and North-America, *sovereigns* either native or  
 " foreign, have despised armies, which were made  
 " up of the people; yet by such armies were these  
 " sovereigns finally beaten or disgraced, their con-  
 " tempt of them being the surest prelude of their  
 " disappointment. — To conclude, Sire, you must  
 " do nothing by halves, and have no retrospects;  
 " you must consider your power as derived, not  
 " from birth, but from delegation; you must tu-  
 " tor your mind to look habitually and cheerfully  
 " to the following principle, which burst involun-  
 " tarily from a member of the British Senate;  
 " namely, *that the People have rights, but that*  
 " *Kings and Princes have none*; (meaning thereby,  
 " that the people derive their rights from *nature*,  
 " and Kings and Princes from *mutable human insti-*  
 " *tutions*.) If you can do this, you may still be  
 " the proudest King in Europe, because your peo-  
 " ple will associate their ambition with your own  
 " to make you such. But, if you cannot do this,  
 " you will be worse than nothing, for you will be  
 " unfortunate. — As this is the language of an  
 " independent

“ independent man, without hope, without fear,  
“ and who really respects you, I trust that it  
“ will have its weight, should it fortunately reach  
“ you.”

*A CALM OBSERVER.*

*P. S.* This letter does not acquit me of my promise of giving the late King of Prussia's history of the first partition of Poland; which I shall speedily fulfil in a letter, which, I trust, will be my concluding one.

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L E T T E R V.

The History of the first Partition of POLAND,

*Abridged from the Works of the late King of PRUSSIA,*

WITH REMARKS:

*Published August 13, 1793.*

S I R,

I AM now about to give a relation of the first partition of Poland, extracted, not from the writings of an envenomed sufferer, or an uninformed pamphleteer, but from the royal, and probably partial, historian, who was himself a great and profiting actor in it; and who deliberately addresses an account of it to posterity, in order to increase his glory. — In this abridgement, (in which, I must observe, that there are considerable transpositions,) wherever the passage is important, I have translated

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the

the *original* expressions of the author ; and, therefore, wherever any indignation is roused in the reader, he may be assured that it is justly placed. — Perhaps there never was so useful a specimen of state-morality exhibited to mankind, in so authentic a manner, as in the present instance ; and the young and old politician may equally profit by this faithful exhibition of the wiles of a military prince, who, by being able to add force to his cunning, has fully shewn to what extent the ambition of a military potentate can proceed, in spite of literary passions and a civilized age for its spectators. — A few observations will be subjoined, for none are intermixed, with the following

*Abridged Account of the First Division of Poland, extracted from the Fifth Volume of the posthumous Works of Frederic the Second, of Prussia ; published under the Sanction of the present King of Prussia, by M. HERTZBERG, Minister to both Sovereigns.*

‘ The Austrians, in 1771, having entered the  
 ‘ lordship of Zips, in Poland, upon pretence of  
 ‘ some money due to them by the Republic, the  
 ‘ Empress of Russia told Prince Henry of Prussia,  
 ‘ that, if Austria dismembered Poland, other neigh-  
 ‘ bours had a right to do the same. — The hint  
 ‘ was seasonable, for it was the only way of con-  
 ‘ tenting every one, and of avoiding new troubles.  
 ‘ But it was necessary for the King of Prussia to  
 ‘ know whether the Empress was serious. The  
 ‘ King,

King, having caused the Court of Peterburgh to  
 be farther founded upon this subject, found, that  
 Count Panin had assured the Poles, that Poland  
 should be kept intire. Nevertheless, the matter  
 was formally debated in the councils of the Em-  
 press, and the King was informed that he might re-  
 imburse himself in Poland, for the subsidies which  
 he had lately paid to Russia. — It was insisted  
 upon, however, as a preliminary, that the King  
 should break the matter to the Court of Vienna;  
 which he did, by giving assurances, that Russia  
 felt no umbrage at the Austrians having stationed  
 themselves on the Polish territory; and that he,  
 for his part, advised possession in this quarter to be  
 extended at pleasure, as the example would be  
 followed by other neighbours. Austria conceived  
 so much jealousy at this suggestion, (for reasons  
 which will soon appear,) that she offered to with-  
 draw her troops from Poland. But, in a matter  
 of this nature, trifles could not discourage the  
 King, who knew that Austria would adopt diffe-  
 rent sentiments, if he could only agree with  
 Russia; and that Austria would be afraid of a  
 war with both united. He, therefore, made no  
 remark on what had passed, in order to give time  
 to Austria for reflection.

The indolence and slowness of Russia, however,  
 called for something which might excite her; and  
 the King informed her of the manner in which  
 Austria had abused her situation, as mediatrix be-

‘ tween herself and the Turks, with whom she  
 ‘ was still at war. — As Russia felt that the King  
 ‘ was of importance to her, she thought it requi-  
 ‘ site to procure him some advantages; and, there-  
 ‘ fore, invited him to send her the project of a  
 ‘ treaty for dividing Poland. The project was sent,  
 ‘ and it gave her a *carte blanche* over Poland.

‘ Austria was averse to any plan; first, lest her  
 ‘ Greek subjects, in consequence of their vicinity,  
 ‘ should grow too fond of Russia; and, secondly,  
 ‘ lest she should suffer by having this formidable  
 ‘ neighbour introduced (in the place of the weaker  
 ‘ Turks) into the Turkish provinces. — The King,  
 ‘ on his part, was no less critically situated; but he  
 ‘ was bound to Russia by a treaty, from which he  
 ‘ expected advantages; and he not only could gain  
 ‘ no credit by neutrality, but it would even be at-  
 ‘ tended with *danger*; as the two imperial courts,  
 ‘ after fighting with one another, would have made  
 ‘ up their differences at his expence. — To soften the  
 ‘ Austrians, therefore, the King intimated his hopes  
 ‘ of moderating the pretensions of Russia, with res-  
 ‘ pect to Turkey; but he added, that, in case of  
 ‘ extremity, he must act as the ally of Russia. —  
 ‘ That he might give weight to this declaration, he  
 ‘ increased and remounted his cavalry; a measure  
 ‘ which had the farther effect of occasioning Russia  
 ‘ to reduce her pretensions with respect to the  
 ‘ Turkish possessions in the neighbourhood of Aus-  
 ‘ tria.

‘ But

' But Russia had so formed the project of the  
 ' treaty respecting Poland, that she had placed all  
 ' the advantage on her side, and left all the risk for  
 ' Prussia. — The King remonstrated, among other  
 ' things, that, in the actual crisis of affairs, it be-  
 ' came the dignity of so vast a monarchy as Russia to  
 ' pay less regard to its own interests than to the  
 ' *public good*. He also desired, on his side, the ad-  
 ' dition of Dantzic. These representations had, at  
 ' first, the usual fate, of not being properly attend-  
 ' ed to; — but time led Russia to accommodate  
 ' herself to the interests of other powers, and she  
 ' promised to give up all the Turkish conquests be-  
 ' tween the Danube and the Dnieister. — This news  
 ' being quickly communicated to Austria, Prince  
 ' Kaunitz, for the first time, appeared tranquil-  
 ' lized; his fears of the great successes of Russia  
 ' disappearing the moment that it was known that  
 ' there was no danger of her becoming a neigh-  
 ' bour. The Turks, also, who were informed of  
 ' the favourable disposition of Russia, and who  
 ' were sick of the war, became more tractable on  
 ' their side. — Nevertheless, Russia was slow and  
 ' irresolute, the principal difficulty arising from  
 ' Dantzic, the transfer of which the *English* excited  
 ' the Russians to oppose. In the end, however,  
 ' the King gave up this demand; it being evident,  
 ' that the possessor of the Vistula and of the *port* of  
 ' Dantzic; would, *in time*, render the town of  
 ' Dantzic subject to himself; and that, therefore,



‘ the cession of the town itself was in fact only *deferred*. — After long delays Russia sent her *ultimatum* to Prussia ; and, though she stipulated for a very undue proportion of succours, in case of a war with Austria, yet, as Austria seemed of *late* to have grown more pacific, the King resolved not to put an end to a beneficial treaty, for an object which *never could come into question*.

‘ A secret convention, therefore, between Russia and Prussia, in the first instance, was signed in February, 1772, and possession was agreed to be taken in June ; the two contracting parties mutually stipulating to guarantee their acquisitions in Poland, and to act in concert for obtaining the assent of the Republic.

‘ Austria, however, was again to be invited to partake of this division ; but Prussia was to join Russia against her, if she preferred hostilities to a share in Poland. — It now remained, therefore, again to negotiate with the Court of Vienna, where parties were divided ; for, while the Emperor desired to regain certain dominions from the Turks, the Empress Queen had become devout and pacific ; and Prince Kaunitz hesitated between war on one side, and the spoils of Poland, which might *hazard* his *favourite* alliance with the *Bourbon* family, on the other. — The King, however, having strongly put the necessity of choosing between peace and war, Austria concluded by resolving to renounce the alliance with the Turks,

‘ and

‘ and all the speculations to be expected in that  
 ‘ quarter; and to join in the partition of Poland,  
 ‘ upon terms of a perfect equality, as the only  
 ‘ means of avoiding war. The event was imme-  
 ‘ diately made known to Russia, where it was re-  
 ‘ ceived with pleasure; and the terms, therefore,  
 ‘ previously concluded between Russia and Prussia,  
 ‘ on the subject of Poland, were now communica-  
 ‘ ted to Austria.

‘ In her counter-project, Austria took care not  
 ‘ to forget herself; but, as the King feared the in-  
 ‘ terference of *other* powers, he obtained the assent  
 ‘ of Russia, after Austria had modified some of the  
 ‘ conditions of it. — By this time August had arri-  
 ‘ ved, and it was agreed to make a concerted de-  
 ‘ claration to Poland, in September; and also to  
 ‘ come into a mutual guarantee of the intended  
 ‘ possessions. — At the same time, Austria promised  
 ‘ to join the King, in inducing the Turks to yield  
 ‘ to the propositions of Russia.

‘ At an extraordinary Polish Diet, which it was  
 ‘ agreed that the King of Poland should be ex-  
 ‘ hortated to summon, for the intire pacification of  
 ‘ the kingdom, it was determined that each party  
 ‘ should exhibit its *pretensions* to its respective share  
 ‘ in Poland. The King laid claim to one portion,  
 ‘ on account of some money-transactions; to ano-  
 ‘ ther portion, as being an ancient family possession;  
 ‘ and to another, as being the equivalent of Dant-  
 ‘ zic, which was stated to have been included in

‘ the possession just mentioned.—We will not de-  
 ‘ tail here the *rights* of the three powers. It was ne-  
 ‘ cessary that a singular conjuncture should influence  
 ‘ all the parties, and produce an *agreement for a*  
 ‘ *partition*, which alone could prevent a general  
 ‘ war. In order to indemnify Russia for the *con-*  
 ‘ *quests* which the Austrians had required should be  
 ‘ *restored* to the Porte, there was no method but by  
 ‘ assigning possessions to it in Poland. Austria had  
 ‘ set an example, by occupying Zips with her  
 ‘ troops; and, to keep up in some manner the *ba-*  
 ‘ *lance of power* in the North, it was of course ne-  
 ‘ cessary that the King should have a share.—This  
 ‘ then is the first instance in history of a partition,  
 ‘ arranged and terminated *amicably* between three  
 ‘ powers. But, without the *particular position of Eu-*  
 ‘ *rope* at the moment, the most able negotiations  
 ‘ would have failed; so much do affairs depend  
 ‘ upon *time and opportunity*.

‘ As to the Turks, they were not forgotten;  
 ‘ and Austria joined Prussia in pressing for a con-  
 ‘ gress to treat of peace with Russia; which accor-  
 ‘ dingly had place, and began favourably; but,  
 ‘ when particulars came to be discussed, the Turks  
 ‘ proving stubborn, the Russian minister, Count  
 ‘ Orlow, took them at their word, and quitted  
 ‘ them, as his *personal interests called him back to*  
 ‘ *Petersburgh*. A second congress at Bucharest did  
 ‘ not prove more successful; and it was not till July  
 ‘ 1774, after the Turks had suffered much from  
 ‘ the

the continuance of the war, that a treaty with Russia took effect.

Several other intervening circumstances occurred; such as the resistance of the Court of France to the proceedings in Poland, by means of a *Revolution in Sweden*: and by her endeavours to form a quadruple alliance between herself, Great Britain, Spain, and Sardinia, for the same object; as well as by her suggesting difficulties of a commercial nature respecting Dantzic, which were adopted by Great Britain and Russia. But as the King treated what respected Dantzic as an attempt to give law to him in his *own* states, which belonged to him as *fully* as the provinces of which the other two powers had taken possession, he finally persuaded Russia that every one ought to be master at *home*.

But discussions of a more serious nature arose. — The Russians complained, that Prussia and Austria had exceeded their limits in the division of Poland. The King therefore offered to retract on his side, if Austria would do the same; — but the Austrians, affecting haughtiness and a great display of dignity, peremptorily refused to yield an inch, and every thing was suffered to remain.

The diet now assembling in Poland, in July, 1773, the three Courts published their manifesto, with a deduction of their claims; which they supported by the march of troops, who were ordered to

' to act in concert against such nobles, as caballed  
 ' or opposed the *novelties* introducing into their  
 ' country; and the King and Republic were re-  
 ' quired to sign.—The Poles made delays and diffi-  
 ' culties; but the Court of Vienna proposed to fix  
 ' a day, which, if not attended to, the three Courts  
 ' would immediately divide the *whole* kingdom  
 ' between them; but it was added, that out of *re-*  
 ' *gard*, and if they gave marks of docility, the  
 ' troops should be withdrawn, after the act of ces-  
 ' sion should be signed.—No sooner was this decla-  
 ' ration published, than every thing arranged itself;  
 ' the whole was signed before September; and Po-  
 ' land had her *remaining* provinces *guaranteed* to  
 ' her.

' The Poles at first were soured, and hoped  
 ' that Russia would still meet with difficulties from  
 ' the Turks;—but instead of seeing their expecta-  
 ' tion fulfilled, they had *new* complaints to make of  
 ' the encroachments of Austria and Prussia, which  
 ' were not altogether without foundation; for the  
 ' Austrians, using a defective map of Poland, had  
 ' confounded the names of two rivers; and the  
 ' King thought it necessary, upon the agreed prin-  
 ' ciple of an *equality in the partition*, to extend his  
 ' *own* boundaries after their example.—Here again  
 ' Russia interfered, and again the King offered to  
 ' be ruled by the proceedings of Austria;—but  
 ' Austria, dry and haughty, again announced her  
 ' firm resolution *not to quit possession*.

' Dantzic

' Dantzic and the Austrian encroachments were  
 ' still, however, the subject of negotiation or diffi-  
 ' culty; when Russia received the copy of the trea-  
 ' ty between Vienna and the Porte, *signed in 1771*;  
 ' —by which Austria had engaged to oblige Russia  
 ' to restore her conquests over Turkey, upon *con-*  
 ' *dition* that Turkey should pay her a subsidy, and  
 ' make certain cessions, (which would render Aus-  
 ' tria an umpire between these two powers in any  
 ' succeeding war.) But, though the treaty was  
 ' never ratified, Austria had *received some of the mo-*  
 ' *ney*; and, after signing the treaty respecting Poland,  
 ' she had thrown obstacles in the way of Russia,  
 ' with regard to the Turks. — The King had  
 ' reason to complain as well as Russia; because he  
 ' had been led to engage the Russians to desist  
 ' from their conquests. — These intrigues discovered  
 ' the unmeasured ambition and desire of aggrandize-  
 ' ment in Austria; and ought to make other pow-  
 ' ers upon their guard, as to what *she* may under-  
 ' take in future. — The Russians, however, desired  
 ' to transfer the whole quarrel to Prussia, and to en-  
 ' gage the King, as a bold champion, to provoke  
 ' Austria to combat; but, the Turks being silent,  
 ' and the circumstances of Europe being also un-  
 ' promising, the King wrote to Petersburg; that  
 ' he did not choose to make himself the *Don Quix-*  
 ' *otte of the Turks*.

' The Poles did not readily accede to the *exten-*  
 ' *sion* of the Austrian and Prussian boundaries; and  
 ' the

the delegation of the diet, employed itself upon what was called a *Reform of Government*: Nevertheless, Austria and Prussia continued to retain possession.—Russia was impressed with the complaints of the Poles, at what they termed the despotism of these powers; for, having given provinces to great sovereigns, she was still more flattered to be able to *limit* their boundaries.—The King, however, had concerted it with Austria, that both parties should persist and suffer the Poles to clamor, but at the same time endeavour to pacify Russia; and it was for this purpose, that Prince Henry again went to Russia.—Nevertheless Austria, to embroil the two Courts, offered upon this occasion to make some *little concession*, which Prussia was *obliged to follow*; and it was not till 1777 that all the affairs of Poland were completely terminated.

In the interim, *Austria*, under pretence of fixing boundaries, had forced the Turks to surrender to her a part of Buckowina; and, jointly with *France*, she had excited against Russia a sort of hostilities in the Crimea, which, however, were soon appeased;—while, on the other hand, the Russian minister governed the *remainder of Poland* in the name of the Empress, nearly in the same manner that a Roman proconsul used to govern a province of the Roman empire; and on every side the *tranquillity of Europe* appeared upon the point of being disturbed.—This had been still

more

' more true in 1775. Every where the fire lurked  
 ' under its own ashes.—— Considerations of this  
 ' sort oblige prudent sovereigns to remain upon  
 ' their guard, and not to withdraw their attention  
 ' from affairs which may embroil themselves, when  
 ' *least* looked for.—It seems, upon casting an eye  
 ' over history, that vicissitudes and revolutions are  
 ' one of the permanent laws of nature, and that all  
 ' in this world is subject to change; and yet mad-  
 ' men are attached to and idolize the objects of  
 ' their ambition, without being undeceived by the  
 ' illusions of this magic-lantern, which, in their  
 ' eyes, are always perfectly new. But there are  
 ' toys for every age: love for the adult, ambi-  
 ' tion for riper years, and political calculations for  
 ' old men.'

Such is the royal relation of the memorable par-  
 tition of Poland, now perhaps designed to be re-  
 peated by nearly the same actors; and such are the  
 sort of personages to whose justice and benevolence  
 the Duke of Brunswick thinks, that twenty-six  
 millions of souls in France are to be consigned in  
 fee-simple as slaves, without one check but the  
 monarch's gracious pleasure and promise. The good  
 easy man in private life, who sees municipal laws  
 and tribunals dictating justice to subjects, and who  
 endeavours to render it in his own person to his  
 neighbours, and even many of those who haunt the  
 anti-chambers of the great, duped either by their  
 own feelings or their ignorance; have looked hi-  
 therto,



therto, perhaps, with complacency, or at least with patience, on the proceedings of *military* Princes; but they are now let at once into their cabinets; they tread their holy of holies, and view the book of their covenant; and see in it their selfishness, their injustice, and their falsehood, written deeply and immutably in large characters of blood.—The display of these horrors is too luminous to fail of *conviction* with any; but it is necessary that the impression should be forcible enough to lead to immediate *action*; and, for this purpose, I beg to introduce my promised

## R E M A R K S.

1. It is prettily said by some one, that when a lamb is once devoted, any thicket, into which it happens to stray, will furnish the fuel necessary for its sacrifice. But here Poland had not strayed; and the only thing to impute to it was, that itself was weak, and that its sacrificers were strong.—They looked out for pretexts, therefore, against this lamb, just as the wolf did in the fable; for, it was not the pretext for the slaughter which offered itself first to their minds, but the resolution to devour; and the pretext was only produced because the affairs of princes seemed to require ceremonials.—But, if kingdoms are allowed to be merely private properties, it would follow, (as the King said regarding the Dantzickers), that, at least, *chacun est maître chez soi*,

*sei*, every one is uncontrolled at home. But this principle, which was designed to hold good against Dantzic, whenever ravished *from* Poland, was not allowed to operate in preserving its connection with Poland; it being the rule of military princes, that *might makes right*. — To have a clearer idea of the case before us, let it be supposed, that to two litigants, who were harrassed with an expensive and dubious civil suit, a third party should suggest as follows: ‘ An easy prize, more valuable than that for which you struggle, offers; it belongs, indeed, to another, but, if you find resistance, it will be a reason to strip that other of his whole possessions; but remember, though I assume the guise of a mediator between you, I claim a third of the spoil, to enable me to meet you on proportionable terms, should I have future disputes with either of *yourselves*.’ — A second partition of Poland, however, at this instant, would be still more flagrant than the first; because the triumvirs, having no contentious suit at issue, and Poland, having lately assumed a respectable face in her internal government, the partition could only stand upon the principle which justifies any three men, in private life, in robbing a weaker fourth.

2. The relation I have given above exhibits the little trust in politics to be reposed in promises, in flattering prospects of the moment, or, in short, in any thing but in caution and invulnerability. — In  
the

the brief negotiation before us, we have seen Prussia first in an understanding with both of its rivals, and then thwarted by both of them; next, we have observed that Poland, which sprang like the ram from the bush to become an offering for another, and which was to prove an universal panacea, failed after all in procuring an immediate peace for Turkey, nor did it prevent the war, in 1778, about Bavaria; and, when the peace was made for Turkey, Turkey was only found to be saved from Russia to be pillaged by Austria. Since the year 1777, Austria has been repeatedly embroiled with Prussia, and Prussia with Russia. Lately, indeed, there have followed scenes of amity; for, first, Russia and Austria have come into league; next Prussia has associated with Turkey and Poland; and then, after abandoning both of these powers, Prussia has joined itself to Russia and Austria, in order to establish a more powerful triumvirate. But, whether it was an alliance made, or an alliance broken, the reason was the same; each party acted for his interest at the moment; and, therefore, as no bonds could be a security against tergiversation, so no enmity ever rendered a reconciliation hopeless.—The same for guarantees. The triumvirate guaranteed the fragment of Poland, and yet Russia immediately governed it as a Roman province; and its independence is again attacked by Russia and the other triumvirs at the present moment. The Polish dissidents, against whom Russia fought previous to the first

first partition, are the very same persons whom Russia is now supporting; and *vice versa* as to their opponents. The old form of government in Sweden, also, was long under the guarantee of Russia; yet Russia, afterwards, confirmed the scandalous change made in it by its deceased monarch, because it suited her politics. I shall only allude to, but not enlarge upon, various other events in the Low Countries, and other parts of the Austrian dominions, as well as in Liege, Holland, Turkey, and Sweden; all of which shew, that, amidst outward civilities, there may be secret intrigues; and that, when the turn is served, *saute qui peut*, no matter for the hindmost.—Two smaller traits, in the history of the above negotiation, indicate the King of Prussia's infidelity, not under the pressure of subsequent circumstances, but even at the moment of framing his engagements; I mean where he desists from his demand of the town of Dantzic, because he could afterwards, at his leisure, become master of it; and where he signed also an article for furnishing succours to Russia, with which it is clear he never designed to comply, though he states it as a mental pretext, that these succours never could be called for.—But the King of Prussia's adjustment of the difficulty about the *extra* encroachments of Austria, beyond the original compact, by making *equivalent* encroachments on his side, is not less in point than the rest. One would think, that this sagacious politician had ta-

ken his hint (for wise men turn small hints to great account) from the monkey in the fable, who had to divide a stolen cheese between two cats; and that, like the monkey, in balancing the more and the less, he would have approved of a swallow of the whole of Poland, had he not been afraid of the rest of Europe disturbing the repast. — I shall add another circumstance under this head; which is, that the silence of princes, and their petty bickerings, form as little safeguard as their promises; for the treaty for the partition of Poland, after being made first between double, and then between triple, parties, and meeting many delays and fluctuations, burst forth upon the Poles at the end of secret conferences between the triumvirs, which had lasted during *a year and a half*; and the late movements of M. Bishopswoerder also prove, that the present plans of the triumvirate have also been concerted, and waiting for the season of their execution for a number of months. — And can any nation, then, and especially a free nation, where powerful military princes are concerned, count itself safe upon any other principle than its own vigilance, and its exciting that of other powers? — I do not, however, accuse the *late* King of Prussia of duplicity in the pacific and even paternal language which he held at the close of his life, (which every prince ought deeply to study;) nor do I suppose, that this change in him was altogether like that of certain females, whose morals improve with age, owing to extinguished passions,

passions, and the offensive progress of younger candidates for admiration. On the contrary, his philosophic pursuits, and his improvement of his dominions, (where he verified his simile, that "princes ought to be like the spear of Achilles, which inflicts wounds and cures them; which causes mischief to nations, and should repair them;") I say his conduct, in these regards, shewed that he was worthy of much esteem. In like manner, the Empress of Russia, in many particulars, commands the respect of Europe; and the late Emperor Joseph merited far more applause than he has received. — But, unfortunately, they were *military potentates*; and, still more to infatuate them, they were *triumvirs*; and the fascinations of uncontrolled power are too much for human virtue and human intellect long to withstand.

3. The distrust, which these great powers manifested for one another, is very instructive to the rest of Europe. They certainly acted wisely, for they knew their own characters. — But is it not wonderful that Great Britain should omit to copy the diffidence exhibited by such good judges, founded on their respective self-knowledge, and confirmed by public and private incidents regarding each other? Indeed those, who are read in diplomatic memoirs, are sensible, that the above negotiation is but a sample for all the rest. — When royal personages, therefore, call each other brothers, cousins, and friends, they design thereby to signify that they are

of a different race from their subjects; and that, in spite of all their double dealings, they are connected exclusively with *one another as princes*.

4. After the great planets of our sublunary world have for ages exerted their skill in oppositions, they are now at last trying the effect of conjunctions; and, instead of wasting their strength upon each other in hard blows, with little profit and perpetual resentment, they think it better, for those who are strong, to associate with one another against those who are feeble. — I am afraid that their secret is too well founded upon the state of human affairs; as the triumvirs are placed in parts of the world, which are disunited, weak, or rich; and are able to make the same individuals, who fight unsuccessfully in the hands of their enemies, become valuable recruits to augment their own forces. And, be it remembered, that, for many years, the triumvirs, separately or jointly, have always been engaged in attempts at plunder; and that, whatever plunder they have obtained, by any peace or in any convention, they have *permanently retained*, (whether won from Poland, Turkey, Sweden, or, in part, even from Bavaria.) — Suppose the remnant of Poland, then, and the French nation, to be next reduced; and suppose, that, without either of ~~these~~ countries being farther dismembered as to their territory, yet, that both should only be taken out of the balance of Europe by internal circumstances or foreign influence, what is to become of Great Britain, after

after thirty-five millions of people are thus, as it  
 were, annulled in Poland and France, (if not op-  
 posed to her,) when the triumvirate is at the head  
 of near sixty other millions of people of their  
 own? Has she allies in Europe or out of Europe,  
 or allies upon another globe, ready to take her part  
 in such a crisis? Will she, who used to protect o-  
 thers, herself find any protectors? Will she hang  
 her fate upon the single thread of a state-marriage,  
 of which the death of *either* of the contracted par-  
 ties, or the want of issue, or a counter state-mar-  
 riage, or various other incidents, may defeat the  
 effect; and when the ally, also, to whom it seems  
 to connect us, may have fallen a prey to false  
 friendships, or have overstrained himself by unwei-  
 ldy enterprizes, or may prefer a sullen or politic  
 neutrality to action in our favour; and when that  
 alliance may be perverted to dangerous internal  
 purposes? — But the case is strong enough on the  
 footing of *foreign* politics, without alluding to the  
*constitutional* difficulties capable of arising out of it;  
 — I shall, therefore, conclude this head by obser-  
 ving, that, as the nature of the British government  
 recoils from a settled system of conquest, and as we  
 are strong enough to excite jealousy in conquerors,  
 and rich enough to pay the expences of our own  
 subduing; we are likely to become the objects of  
 direct attack, to those whose plans we shall not aid,  
 and which we may therefore endanger, unless we  
 ourselves are first disabled; till, by degrees, we



may at last arrive at the dignity of becoming a scape-goat or make-weight, like Poland or Holland, in some of the quarrels or some of the projects of the potentates of a higher order. Whether this is to happen now, or a little time hence, is not a point upon which we are permitted to calculate; since none, at any period, must have the power, either directly to ruin us, or even to enfeeble us by inducing the necessity of large defensive armaments.

5. If it be said, that the triumvirs may soon quarrel, I allow it; but not before they may have done fatal mischief during the time of their having remained agreed. If, like the chiefs of the forest, they congregate to seize their prey, and then fight about the division, what consolation is this to the fallen victim?—But I have already shewn the distinction between treaties which are *prospective* only in their action, and those which are *immediate*; between treaties which often operate as a burthen on *one* side, and those which present temptations to *both* sides; between treaties where *disparity of force* both supersedes the need of war and insures the booty, and those where nothing is certain but the conflict. — As the treaty of the triumvirs is of the more dangerous of these two species, let us not lay the flattering unction to our souls, that discord is to defeat their efforts. The triumvirs assembled in 1772, ruined Poland, served themselves, and then quarrelled at their leisure. They have assembled a-  
gain

gain in 1792, Poland is again their spoil, and they menace France in addition; and, after again doing mischief, which may or may not serve themselves, what is it to us, if they again quarrel, again to agree, in order to accomplish farther evil?—Whenever they combine, they move like a mass of mountain-snow, formed in cold and lofty regions, which, progressively augmenting itself in proportion to its size and weight, may perhaps split itself into fragments against some vast obstacle interposed by nature, or lie to be dissolved in the sunshine of a luxurious prosperity; but not before it has marked its rapid passage by an universal ruin of the works of man.—Whether they actually conquer therefore, or whether they only actively or passively *threaten* conquest, they will in each way do us harm.—Let us then check the beginning of the evil, which alone is in our power; without waiting for the end of it, which is not only beyond remedy, but even beyond mitigation.—There appear no limits to the *strength* of the triumvirs; and we are certain that there are none to their *ambition*, of which the vast capacious maw, instead of being satisfied by having devoured kingdoms, only acquires thence new inclination and new force to gorge in farther havoc.

6. I have said nothing of commerce, because I think it is a minor and dependent consideration. But how can commerce, which is a much less hardy plant than agriculture, flourish in the climate of despotism, amidst fickle blasts and eternal snows,

where the sun only now and then, as an act of chance, plays upon the surface? Besides commercial connexions are slow of growth, and easily injured or destroyed.—I have not had it at heart, therefore, to say any thing respecting *particular* modes in which Russia, for example, may affect our commerce; since it appeared to me that despotism is an evil so extensive, as to strike at *all* our trade.—But a few words will shew that I did not shun the more limited inquiry, as turning to my disadvantage; for, first, we depend less than has been apprehended, upon foreign commerce, which only respects *partial* transactions with foreign nations; whereas our internal commerce respects the total interchange between subject and subject, taking it in a retail sense, and in most instances even in a wholesale one, and as including both consumption and supply; (all which, the separation of America, and various wars, and various incidents, under commercial treaties, have fully proved.) In the next place, a circuitous commerce is often to be substituted for a direct one, where a direct one is interrupted; and, when a state is flourishing, the hands and the capital thrown out of one employment commonly fall into another.—Besides, should Russia interdict our commerce, she can only wound us by a blow which must first pierce through herself; and the experiment might be attended with more than a temporary inconvenience to her, considering the similar sources of supply offering in the old and recent settlements

elements of North America, as well as in other countries.—I shall not dwell upon the trite but true arguments, that general civilization and increase of population extend markets; that general wealth renders them more and more profitable; and that there is a peculiar advantage in a perfected country like England trading with a rude country like Poland: I shall rather conclude by observing, that it is a serious difficulty to a trading nation whenever any of its customers are deprived of a *direct* access to the sea; and that this may soon become the case with the Polish territories, if not attended to. The difficulties imposed upon the *transit* of commodities are found capable in various countries, though under the *same* dominion, of operating to extinguish trade; and this will be still more true in the case of a difference of *sovereignty*, and especially between powers unequal in their strength or means of retaliation.—I shall now conclude with a few words respecting Prussia and France.

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*Prussia* is a power, of which I have ventured to speak with the more freedom, on account of the interest which every loyal British subject must feel in it. The *former* successes of Prussia, however, I would observe, have been chiefly owing to her always fighting at home, with chosen troops, under a monarch who, as such, inspired them with  
peculiar

peculiar energy; and who always carrying in himself his whole cabinet, and always making his military and civil concerns in turn yield to each other; and being able also, as sovereign, to stifle jealousies between his commanders, and from his central post to lend or borrow troops throughout his different armies and garrisons, in order to face his surrounding enemies both in winter and summer, as his central knowledge shewed to be necessary, possessed peculiar advantages; especially as being, besides, a prince of rigid economy, and having a barren frontier to oppose to Prussia and to Sweden.—But the face of things is greatly changed, when a more expensive court occurs; and when, for a home, there is a distant war presented, in which the Prussian soldiers are to be separated from their families; the domestic magazines are to be put out of the question, and forage and army rations are either to be bought with money in an exhausted country, or with blood in a hostile one; and when the active force solely of the assailants has to overcome both the active and local forces, the fortresses, and the other resources of the defenders of a proud, populous, and military, country, which spends all its money at home, and which, if it weathers the first burst of the storm, will probably soon possess more union than can ever belong to jealous allies.—Besides, if the Prussian army meets with accidents, whether from war or desertion, the King of Prussia will be like a trader losing the *chief of his stock*

*stock in trade*, as it cannot be easy to him soon to replace it with another equally good or equally numerous; and when a power, naturally of the second order, once falls into a state of weakness, it becomes another word for a state of insult; and its smallest lapse below its artificial level may prevent its ever again being able to regain it, at least without expensive and bloody efforts. — I shall not here discuss the question concerning the *new allies* of Prussia; I shall only observe, that, as no man can serve two masters, so no man can be the supporter of contending interests. *Idem velle, idem nolle; ea demum amicitia.*

France is become a very peculiar country, full of contradictions, and ever making progress in the most important and unexpected changes. But, whatever it may do to itself, it becomes not *us* to cause its ruin. — Every struggle upon earth, in my opinion, ought to be used to keep the French together, to prevent its being necessary for us singly to play the part of *knights-errants*, in defence of the distressed powers of Europe. This task is necessary as long as triumvirs exist; and it should not fall upon us to hold the heavy scales of Europe and the other quarters of the world *alone*. — From the pace at which things are moving on in France, it is hard to say, whether France would be completely satisfied, *even upon the ratification of the present French Constitution by the triumvirs, with the present King as its chief*. Certain it is, however,

ever, that we ought to endeavour to procure this precise termination to the business;\* both in order to withdraw Prussia from a scene of difficulty, and even to facilitate the retreat of Austria; as well as to restore to Europe the proper number and weight of its poises; and there is nothing yet appearing on the part of the allies, which does not *consistently admit* of this measure. In addition to this, we ought as much as possible to join the French in propagating *peace principles*, both by reason and by force, if necessary; endeavouring to make every power sit down with the *uti possidetis*, which is surely enough to satisfy both the happiness and the honorable pride of them all, and is a measure greatly in favour of ourselves. If the Legislative Body in France at present *exceeds* its duty, there is no candid man but must allow, that the Executive has hitherto *fallen short* of it; and yet the good of the country requires, while their form of constitution lasts, that each party should be held in its place. Were I the King, (if he be yet a King,†) I would desire the Assembly to name me a ministry, and embrace it as my saviour; for, when the hill will not go to Mahommed,

\* The reader is constantly requested to attend to the date of these letters, as explanatory of their contents.

† The 10th of August proved this to be a prophetic doubt.

Mahommed

Mahommed must go to the hill. This sacrifice is rendered bitter by nothing but pride; and an universal concert within and without France would soon pacify pride. — And, as to the counter-stroke which such an event would have upon our own domestic situation, it is ridiculous in the present moment to think of it: and yet none are more opposed than myself to great and violent changes at home; as I desire not in my time to see any thing beyond our present constitution of King, Lords, and Commons, with a few well-known and prudent reforms, in which all lovers of quiet, high or low, seem to me alike interested.

My time is more exhausted than my subject; but let me be allowed to heave, as I hope, only a passing sigh in favour of *Poland*. Its amiable king, who certainly loves his people, for he loves human kind; who is brave, as well as patient; and who has shewn sufficient disinterestedness, by risking at a late period of life, without having any legal successor, both his quiet and his throne, by originally introducing the new constitution; such a king, I say, can only have yielded to a sad necessity, in submitting to receive law from Russia and Prussia. — I do not, however, by any means think the fate of things in Poland finally decided on the side of misfortune. The good sense of Russia leaves much open to reflection and mediation; but if Russia proves, as I cannot believe, obdurate, it will then be for Europe to consider,



consider, how far a power, situated in one corner of it, is to give law to its other kingdoms; and since many years ago Russia was able to march 10,000 men to the banks of the Rhine, it becomes Great Britain also to contemplate what is to happen, should she proceed by internal routes to India, or lead a hundred thousand men opposite to the British coast, or against any of our allies. In any event, whatever be the persecution of Russia or the desertion of Europe, the King of Poland and the Poles have this to console them — that nothing can be done to them which will not place them higher in the opinion of *all* mankind, present and future, than their tyrants and betrayers, if by such they are to suffer.

*A CALM OBSERVER.*

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LETTER VI.\*

*Published March 25 and 29, 1793.*

S I R,

**T**HE event of our war with France must be one of the three following descriptions: successful, disastrous, or mixed. If it is to be

\* Several letters are here omitted, as irrelative to the general subject. Two of them appear in the Appendix.

disastrous

disastrous or mixed, *none* will deny the eligibility of an instant peace. — But what will be said when it is affirmed, that a war of *success* is that, which is to be deprecated by us beyond every other? This seeming paradox, however, will speedily vanish.

It is not we ourselves, but continental powers, (acknowledged in the cases of Ockzakow and Poland, *not* to be subject to our influence,) who, take the lead in the present war; and the war is by them directed, not against the detached and puny *foreign* possessions of France, but against her very *vitals and existence*; and since the chief of these powers have combined upon plans of aggrandizement, to which France has hitherto proved the barrier, whatever portion of France shall be seized by either of them will have the double effect, of diminishing the obstacles, and of adding to the strength of a confederacy, whose objects are terrible for Europe and for mankind. — Having said thus much to appease surprise, I shall now proceed to obtain conviction.

It is pretended, that one object of the present war is to regulate the *balance of power* (after the example of our forefathers). — Without at present discussing the merit of the system itself in question, I contend, that we are at least violating the principle of it, by a conduct which, *upon the supposition of success*, must destroy, instead of preserving, that balance; for, notwithstanding during the last century

tury the powers of Europe have changed both their mutual proportions and their relations to one another, yet we think to continue that balance, by constantly retaining our *old position*.—France of late, it is to be observed, had Spain at all times, and Prussia or Austria alternately, as her certain allies; but, at present, when *every* power whatever is alienated from France, we think that we have nothing to do, as good posture-masters, but to persist in adding our own weight against that nation. *Idem manebat, neque idem decebat*: we keep to old practice under a rule, of which the very essence implies, a *variation according to circumstances*.

This is the more extraordinary, as the following important novelties have occurred in modern Europe. — First, *Russia*, instead of remaining chained in her woods, and being as barbarous as the beasts that inhabit them, has lately spread herself widely into the politics, as well of Europe as of Asia; having civilized (if I may use the phrase) her military establishments and created a navy; having astonishingly augmented her revenue, her territory, and her population; and having exhibited the only marks of reach in political intrigue seen in *any* of the present continental cabinets. — In the next place, *Austria*, which is at last become the Prussia of Europe, as to military discipline, has abandoned all her old jealousies of the neighbourhood of Russia, and is demonstrably leagued with her upon a system of aggrandizement. At the same time, *Turkey*, which

which is daily decaying in power; *Poland*, which is already partly dismembered, and which now lies bound under the knife of its butchers, ready to be finally dismembered; together with the independent states of Germany, which, having lost their two late protectors in France and Prussia, are independent only in name; I say these several countries respectively offer a general magazine of plunder to these over-weening potentates. Prussia, the *would-be* sharer in the golden fleece, will probably entangle her talons in the burthen; and while, as usual, she thinks that she is deceiving others, will be betrayed herself; for, her army fast dissolving itself, her military discipline visibly declining, and her population being but as *one to eight* compared to the united numbers of the preceding powers, she may at once be caught, along with her plunder, and converted into a common prey. — For the moment, however, these three powers appear at least to be so far in an understanding with one another, as not openly to obstruct their mutual projects; and, when their population is joined to that of Poland and Sardinia, they form a mass of near seventy millions of people for effecting their purposes. — The whole of this dangerous compound does not indeed immediately act against France; because Russia has cunningly engaged the rest of them to plunge into troubled waters, while she herself (according to the proverb) takes the sure part of holding the clothes of the swimmers; but, since she is agreed upon a system

of partition, which comprehends the *French territory*, she co-operates in the fundamental destruction of the *balance of Europe*.

Not content, however, with calmly witnessing this formidable combination, we ourselves add fresh associates to it, in the persons of Great Britain, Holland, Spain, and, according to Mr. Dundas, of "every other power of Europe" that we can bring forwards; pretending that we ought to depress France *to preserve the balance of power*. — After France, however, under Louis XIV. had obtained full demonstration of the impossibility of *ruling Europe*, she has rested content with being its *scale-bolder*; constantly (as I have formerly proved) opposing the strong and aiding the weak, in order to dress the scales and preserve the balance. — Yet her continuance in this useful, but expensive and harassing, office is that, for which we are endeavouring to incapacitate her; though we know of *none to replace her in it*; but, on the contrary, see that the already preponderating scales of the confederacy are so peculiarly placed, as to be the receptacle of all the fragments of dominion, to be gathered up from the East and Center of Europe, as well as from part of the North and of the South.

The imprudence of our conduct will easily be felt from an example. — In the primary dismemberment of Poland, France (according to the decisive

decisive testimony of the late king of Prussia) was the *only* active opponent of the measure; for, abandoning all predilections for her ally, the House of Austria, she sought to form a league in the *West* of Europe (which should include England) against this encroachment meditated in the *East* of it; and, though she failed upon a large plan, yet by her active suggestions she at least helped for a time to rescue Dantzic from its devourers. — In the present attack upon Poland, no fair man can contend that France would not have combined even *enthusiastically* with England, Holland, Spain, and other powers, to have prevented a crime, rendered still more enormous in itself, and more dangerous to all, by its repetition. — Thus, to France, had she been countenanced, would have been twice owing the very important preservation of an European power; for, it needs little to demonstrate, that the more *numerous* are the powers of Europe, the less probability is there of their general *combination*; (by which *alone* the balance, and consequently the independence, of Europe is at all to be endangered.)

Nothing can be more idle, than for a great and insular power, like England, to be meddling in continental quarrels, when they are to end only in *trifling changes*; because the remnant of Europe would always be strong enough to rally against the ambition of powers aiming at universal rule, and England would always be in time to interpose in

their favour. — But, when the changes in Europe are *immense*, when the superior powers in it forget their jealousies, and league with one another against the inferior, and when their greatest opponent is fallen into a state of distraction, (the opportunity offered by which they instantly seize for plunder;) the most puerile politician, who condescends to refer to his acknowledged first principles, must see, that the only antagonist-power which is left ought not to be debilitated, and still less to be extinguished; and that, if positive aid and friendly counsels are refused to it, yet at least neutrality towards it is imperiously commanded by the most weighty of all political considerations. — Ministry have allowed that the difficulty, lately occurring in saving Poland, lay in the want of a co-operating *territorial* power; and they allow also that the difficulty at present of assisting Holland, notwithstanding its vicinity, is owing to the same cause, namely, our want of troops, though Holland is intersected with waters, where our navy may be useful. What then must be the difficulty of defending European and Asiatic Turkey, as also Bavaria, Saxony, and all the smaller spots of European territory; which, like floating ice-islands, that lie forlorn on the ocean, will gradually melt into and augment the body that surrounds them? — And is even *Prussia* to be deemed secure, when, despised for her weakness, and still more for her versatility, her only remaining safeguard is to rest in the *moderation*  
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of the ambitious? When she shall become a lonely inhabitant in that wilderness in Europe, which her own folly will have created, will not her profligate accomplices turn back upon her, to make her renounce her prey, and force her to pass into the throng of the vanquished? — Can Holland be preserved any more than Prussia? — Is *Hanover*, which is always so difficult to be protected, to find any security, when she has lost the benefit of the protecting system of Europe? Is Great Britain to waste herself in the vain enterprise, of covering a distant petty territory against the attacks of immense contiguous continental powers? Is the resource of the royal proprietors of Hanover to rest in a criminal collusion with the coalition of despots, which must in itself be so dangerous to England? — No: the ancient jealousy of France to England will pass into the bosoms of those, who, in case of success, will be the new masters of France; and who will consequently be the derivative claimants of her *maritime* possessions; and as the navy of England (their only check) will affront their pride and oppose their interests, *Delenda est Carthago* will become their constant policy towards England: besides, that, in that awful season, when the danger of the confederacy shall be displayed in its real extent, the English nation will probably be too much agitated to permit any connection so contaminating and so fatal as that with a band of robbers. Consequently, *Hano-*



ver can no more promise to itself safety than the rest.

The phrase, employed by our ancestors upon this subject, is of a nature to teach us wisdom ; for, they insisted, not upon the balance of *alliances*, but upon “the balance of *power*.” They looked with no confidence at what princes might *promise* to do, but with terror only at what they were *able* to do ; and, whenever these princes had power to do wrong, they thought they would have inclination to do it, In *this* sense, then, they acted respecting the balance of power. — In the same manner, the ancient states of Greece, being all territorial and having adjoining boundaries, anxiously studied this system of a balance, till the Macedonians became powerful enough to destroy it ; when Alexander *instantly preceeded upon the conquest of the world*. When Rome afterwards had gained a certain ascendancy of power, foreign states thought, that more was to be gained for themselves by aiding, than by opposing her ; till Rome deceiving them all, one after the other, the world suffered *another conquest*, still more complete than that under Alexander. — The want of standing armies under the feudal system ; with the multiplicity of separate states then existing, the badness of roads, the imperfection of shipping, and other causes, long rendered superfluous, in latter ages, any *permanent* attention to the balance of power in Europe ; the policy of it being said to have been impressed upon Richelieu by

by the Swedish Oxenstiern, who was not forgiven by his proud pupil (according to history) for the merit of being the reviver of a doctrine, of all others *either* the most *frivolous* or the most *important*. — A war, as of late, projected by England for a fort at the south-eastern corner of Europe; or a war, as at present, made to procure stipulations which may be had gratis, and without any war at all; these, I say, are wars, such as the balance of power can never demand. But a war, engaged in by us against France under actual circumstances, as far as the mere balance of power is concerned, is a war made on the *wrong* side, at the most dangerous of moments; being a war not *for*, but *against*, the due balance of power; and consequently worse than frivolous and wanton, being infinitely impolitic.

Europe just now exhibits *four* superior potentates. — First, *Russia*, which is naval, territorial, unassailable, and ambitious; which, to the usual vigour of the North, and the approaching command of the wealth of the East, joins the subtilty of female counsels; and whose population is already thirty millions, which are rapidly increasing, (upon principles so signally exemplified in America and other *new* countries.) Next comes *Austria*, whose population is twenty millions, and also increasing; whose only study is dominion; whose military system is now attaining to great perfection; and who, by the proceedings in Poland, is irrefragably con-

victed of being in concert with Russia. Then follows *France*, possessed of twenty-six millions of people, in a state unnecessary to describe. Lastly, we see *Great Britain and Ireland*; containing twelve millions of people, and only a trifling army, having large foreign possessions indeed, but with which her navy alone forms the bond of union. These are the only powers appearing in Europe of the *first* order; (for Prussia, Sweden, and Holland, have only accidentally and temporarily risen into a high rank, and Spain has long and habitually fallen below her natural position.) Let us consider also, that Russia and Austria have the farther means, while they remain united, of incorporating, into one or other of them, the territories of Poland and Turkey, and large tracts of Germany; the chief of which lie *exclusively* in their neighbourhood, and out of the reach of being defended by other nations.—Yet these two great confederating states are supported by ourselves, and by a multitude of powers of the second and third orders, in an attempt to subdue and dismember France; and this general combination against France is called *preserving* the balance of *power*.

Mr. Locke speaks somewhere of persons who are to be called *persons of one idea*. They see one step only at a time, and cannot recognize the second till events bring it forward. They dread, for instance, the petty and already extinguished danger from the licentiousness of France; and forget the approaching

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ing colossal danger springing from the despotism of uncontrolled *military* powers ; they look at the inveigler only, and forget the robber. But politics require a cool head and an extensive eye ; they must be viewed with *temper* as to their immediate state, and with *diligence* as to their ulterior consequences ; for, as in war there is no room for second mistakes, it is the same with politics in most of its deeper cases. — If we mean, therefore, to guard against the *exercise* of universal dominion, now alone is our time, when we can preclude the *existence* of it ; for, if we allow the power to be created, we as certainly create the will to use it ; and bloody wars will be called for in an attempt to undo what neutrality alone would now with certainty prevent. In a short time, things which are so immense in their result may be out of our reach ; for, though we shall be allowed to aid *the war* against France, we cannot command either the time or the conditions of the *peace* with it, in case the continental powers should overrun it. To command, indeed, a peace for Europe, in spite of others, is in fact to be the *arbiter of Europe* ; so that, at the peace, we must either be lookers on, as being merely a naval power, as far as respects Europe ; or, like Penelope, we must unweave our web, and attempt to reinstate France, if France is pushed too far. — Before, therefore, we seek to annihilate France politically, and still more before we throw her into the preponderating league, we must ask, whether we can separate

parate Austria and Russia? whether we can wrest Poland, also, from their grasp? whether we can protect the Turks? or can even preserve, inviolate from the confederacy, the Germanic body, and the various petty kingdoms and states of Europe?

But two or three difficulties may occur here:—as, first, that in this letter I have *scarcely noticed Prussia*. But does Prussia demand peculiar notice? If, after she has helped to dismember France, she does not accommodate and become the obedient *servant* of Austria and Russia, is it not clear, that she is likely to be made their slave; unless Europe, upon recovering its senses, (of which Prussia is perhaps likely to be first to give the example,) treads back its course of folly, and wages new wars, in order again to restore the poises of Europe, so idly disturbed? — Next, it may be conceived, that France being our peculiar enemy, *it is wise to cripple her, since we may always trust to our navy for our own protection*. The patrons, then, of this opinion are not satisfied with the following recent changes, *consequent upon the new government* of France; namely, her total dissolution of her alliances, as well with Austria as with Spain; her secret contempt for her foreign possessions, (now in a state of intire confusion;) and, lastly, the general terror of her which is fixed in the minds of Europe. — They forget, also, the *double* view to be taken of France, as our old rival, and as a component part of Europe. As a rival, we have always been able to resist her, though she

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had always power enough to be a salutary check upon our own ambition ; and we have resisted her, because she had trans-Atlantic views, which led her into contests with our navy, and thus produced a vulnerability, and gave us a hold over her, *which influenced her conduct, even in her continental politics*, to a degree which could not otherwise have been expected. As a *component part of Europe*, France has been peculiarly useful to us ; for, she has suffered none to attain that supereminence in Europe, to which she herself has found it in vain to aspire ; and, though she has vexed us with intrigues, there was nothing in these to endanger either our existence or that of Europe, as long as she held herself the general guardian of the whole, and especially of the four weakest parts ; namely, Poland, Turkey, independent Germany, and the Italian States. It is, indeed, the more unfortunate, that we forget this double character of France ; since nothing is more certain, than that she had adopted *pacific* principles at the commencement of her revolution, which we might easily have encouraged, and by her means have rendered universal to our own infinite advantage. But, instead of this, she has been forced into war, and into military principles, as well as into new extremes of democratic ones. — Blinded, then, by the smoke and vapour of French politics, we forget the real fire from an opposite quarter, that may soon devour Europe ; and we enter into war with France for speeches and pamphlets.

phlets, as Holland was formerly attacked for pamphlets and medals; forgetting, that Messrs Burke and Calonne have long been caressed at court for their crusading pamphlets; and that Mr. Burke, even in parliament, has always furnished the earliest pretexts of this description for hostility. — But America has given sufficient proof, that we ought to overlook words springing from passion; for, notwithstanding the irritated state of America ten years ago, (which we have since taken so little pains to assuage,) the Vice-President of the American congress and his son have each written in favour of the English Constitution, as opposed to that of France; the secretary of state in America, also, has lost popularity with some, from his supposed great partiality to France; and Mr. Paine, himself, by his opposition to the death of Louis XVI. has shewn, that even democracy has bounds, wherever despair does not force men to overstep them. — As to the omnipotence of our *navy*, I shall only observe, first, that a navy is more or less the necessary appendage of coasts; and that the masters of the whole of Europe must, at the same time, be the masters of its coasts; next, that a navy is subject to disappointment from contrary winds, from calms, from storms, and from uncertainty as to the motions of an enemy; and that, after all, when so short a trip is in question, as the passage from the neighbouring shores of Europe, either to England or Ireland, less skill, less navy, and

and less apparatus, are necessary, than for wars carried on across the ocean; that a successful landing also may easily end in the destruction of our dock-yards and naval stores; and that, when the enemy shall once have entered our country, there is not a single fortress in its internal parts to oppose him.

These arguments become the more urgent, if we reflect that ministry *seem* not to be satisfied with a casual co-operation with the confederates against France, but appear to be about to enlist as confederates themselves; or, in other words, not content with *using the allies*, they seem willing to be *used by them*. I confess I know none but *restraining* clauses which ought to enter into any treaty with these allies, and for such clauses we are, I fear, too late, because the war has already begun, and it is only previous to it that we had much power for imposing them.—There is a second occasion for uneasiness at the conduct of ministry, namely, their *silence as to the terms of peace*; which, as the open declaration of these terms would be useful and honourable, looks as if they are designed to be rendered rigorous in proportion to success; and the rather, as ministry make frequent use of the word "*barrier*," (that is, against the views of France,) without telling us, whether they mean it in a metaphorical or direct, a political or territorial, sense. But, if they design to strip France of its Eastern and Southern boundaries, will they not render it a country weak and open to its *continental* neighbours, and therefore  
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liable to the alarming fate of Poland? — Another objection which offers is, that (whether it shall happen by collusion or deception) it is clearly in the *power* of Russia, during the present conflict, to establish for herself certain posts, which shall serve her as stepping-stones, to enable her to reach and to interfere with our immense empire in the East Indies. — Nor is it useless to remark, that we are about to put ourselves under the necessity of being the school-mistress of Spain, in her naval and military systems; our return received for which services, in the case of Russia, is now but too apparent.

But the following consideration above all is here momentous. — Having already seen, that, merely by reducing the *territory* of France, we shall disturb the balance of Europe; it remains to be added, that this balance will also be affected, should the confederacy restore the *old government* of France, even without diminishing its territory. The Bourbon family cannot, in this case, attribute its return to power to Great Britain, who has so long affected neutrality, and who has been supposed to have been actuated throughout by selfish rather than by other motives; and who, if she gains and retains any of the foreign possessions of the Republic, will, in the end, excite jealousy in the monarch of France; and, if she re-assigns them to the monarch upon his restoration, will leave herself without any of the proposed compensations for her expensive armaments,

ments, and fail in attaching to herself her royal debtor. — To Austria, *alone*, will be given the peculiar merit of the original favour. But, as we are taught by wise men, that a sense of obligation seldom sinks deep in the minds of princes, a more powerful motive than gratitude will be requisite even towards Austria. It is not so much, however, in family relationship, that we shall find this new motive; — but it will rather be found in the necessity of securing a *continuance* of the aid of Austria; whose contiguity, standing forces, and arbitrary form of government, enable her to administer assistance with effect and ease, for the purpose of keeping subjugated the majority of the French nation; which will either long remain refractory to monarchy, or at least will be suspected of so doing by its monarch. Similar services cannot be rendered to the Bourbon family by Great Britain, even were she inclined to that effect; as her standing army is trifling; and the genius and publicity of her government must naturally be opposed to such an employment of her resources; unless we suppose (which would infinitely confirm all our more general arguments,) that, in consequence of the operation of the confederacy, our own government will become devoted to despotic purposes. — Thus the natural result of that degree of success in the confederacy, which shall either enable it to dismember France, or else to restore a Bourbon monarch in it; will be to violate the  
balance

balance of power ; for, in the one view, the confederacy will derive strength from the *spoils* of France ; and, in the other, from the voluntary and interested *concert* of its restored government in the cause of military despotism.—It is, therefore, among other reasons, essential to our interest to procure an immediate and a general peace, lest Austria should gain such an ascendancy in France, as shall enable her either to reduce its territory, or remould its government ; for, should she once *acquire* that ascendancy, and be supported in it by the confederates, it is difficult to say how Great Britain can counteract it ; since we have no influence in Europe, except in what respects the *seas* ; the power of our *land-force* being nothing ; and that of our *treasure*, even when most lavished, being secondary, feeble, and uncertain, as may be known from history and reason.

I have thus produced the *first* of my *positive* arguments in favour of negotiation with France, promised in my last letter ; having here shewn (merely by simplifying our view of Europe), that, in order to preserve the *balance of power in Europe*, it is necessary to keep France intire.—When I explain the danger of a contrary system, it is without affirming, that we may not escape the catastrophe suggested ; for, a prudent man does not delay his attempts to avoid an evil, *till it is proved to him to be thoroughly inevitable*.—It is enough to say, that it behooves

behooves us to place universal military despotism at as many removes *distant from us* as is possible; and not to allow it to come so near, as that *one* farther easy combination shall alone be necessary to enable it to overwhelm us; particularly when the mere re-composition of Europe, upon the most reasonable new bases, may produce severe wars; because the several powers may be some time in *convincing* themselves of their true relative situations under the new system.

In my next letter, I shall produce my remaining objections to a too successful war, all of which will serve as farther arguments for an *immediate* negotiation with France; which, if ministers have rendered impossible by any entanglement in consequence of *recent* alliances, in my opinion, they have involved themselves in a responsibility of the deepest die.

*A CALM OBSERVER.*

*March 18, 1793.*

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LETTER

## L E T T E R VII.

## THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

*Published April 10, 1793.*

S I R,

**W**HILE Poland is in the act of being dismembered by the military Concert of Princes, and while a similar project is more than to be suspected against France, we fight, we pray, and we fast, that the wise and righteous plan may prosper, and call it, *preserving the balance of power in Europe*.—Surely, to create a *preponderance* of power is to destroy its *balance*; and to encourage a *Concert* of Princes is contrary to the maxim which requires us to *divide* their strength; and surely also, if the confederates can possess themselves of Poland and France to-day, it seems strange not to perceive, that with additional ease they may crush Holland and Hanover to-morrow. A war, therefore, which is so contradictory to its own principles, as to be fatal to the general balance of power in proportion to its *successes*, ought immediately to be terminated; and this has furnished our *first positive argument for negotiating with France*.

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But there is another balance, for the preservation of which we have invoked the war, and which the  
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plenary *success* of the war is equally likely to destroy; I mean the *balance of the British Constitution*; and this consideration will furnish a *second* motive for peace.

When M. de Lolme means to applaud our constitution, he speaks of it as a machine balanced by its *own* weights; (*ponderibus librata suis*;) But I shall now shew, that a successful Concert of Princes favours the introduction of *foreign* weights, in the place of these *native* ones; and thus tends, not only to disturb the movements of our constitution, but to hazard its existence.

Though I execrate faction, yet I am not polite enough to shun topics affecting our dearest interests, because they are discountenanced at court; and I shall therefore speak of our domestic dangers from the war against France, with the freedom and impartiality, which are dictated by the history of man, and the importance of the subject, as well as by the real welfare of royalty itself.—If none then can deny, that power naturally seeks its own extension, and is able to accelerate its progress by its own exertions; if power is sometimes violent, sometimes crafty, and always irritable; sometimes self-deceived, but, finally, always self-corrupted; if these are its properties among its most innocent possessors, by what title is it, that the various personages, who succeed each other in rule in *this* country in particular, are to be deemed exempt from this rooted dis-

ease of the human breast? If such then is the disposition of sovereigns in general to acquire power, (for sovereigns are but men,) let us now see the *facilities* offered for this purpose to our own sovereigns in particular, in case of the subjugation of France by the Concert of Princes.

This brotherhood of sovereigns, who have long stifled every remnant of liberty in their own dominions, and have leagued together to enslave Poland, France, and other nations, will naturally rejoice to come into a temporary understanding with the executive government of Great Britain; (for, till of late years, Great Britain has been the active protector of liberty in the people and of independence in the sovereigns of Europe.) It only remains to demonstrate, then, that the executive power of Great Britain will *easily be enabled to meet their approaches*. This demonstration is easy.

It is the prerogative of the executive power of this empire to negotiate exclusively (through ministers of its own choice) with foreign sovereigns; to form treaties, military and commercial, with them; to declare war and peace; to direct, and consequently upon occasion to defeat, the movements of our fleets and armies, (of which it appoints the leading officers,) and therefore to make all these measures subservient to its private views, both positively and negatively, directly and circuitously. These extensive prerogatives acquire additional efficacy

cacy from the courtly doctrines respecting state mystery, and the implicit confidence said to be due to government. And still more are they aided by the powers, military and civil, with which the crown stands invested for internal purposes; and, above all, by its constitutional inviolability, by virtue of which, in cases of extremity, it can at any time obtain an act of oblivion from the public, merely by sacrificing a measure to their importunity or a minister to their resentment. If the people have always had a doubtful anxious struggle with the crown, in consequence of its actual powers, (which were lately declared to be increased, increasing, and proper to be diminished, and which have since most rapidly augmented;) will not the unresisting popular scale soon fly upwards to kick the beam, should foreign aid pour its preponderating mass into the rival scale?— If the *Concert of Princes*, (as we have before remarked,) by the very *novelty of its name*, proves the novelty of its existence in modern times; can we shew, on the other side, that the British nation has received any *new* strength, or any *new* source of security, to countervail the new enemy to be opposed to it? On the contrary, is it not more loudly than ever asserted, that the British people stands insulated and interdicted by law from all negotiations with foreigners; that it is equally illegal for it to combine at home within itself; that it may suffer, but can never act; that it may complain, but must



do so secretly ; and that, when it arms, it is treason, and, when it resists, it is rebellion ?

The case of a *collusion* of our executive power with foreign princes, when once resolved upon, will appear from recent examples. If the Stadtholder is falsely charged with having reluctantly employed, or secretly pallied, the efforts of his nation, during the late war with England ; yet none can deny, that he afterwards quelled all *internal* opposition to himself, by the foreign aid of Prussia. The late constitutional king of France (for, with all our sympathy for his memory, we must confess it) was either a passive witness, or the betrayed instrument, of a secret intelligence with foreign potentates, to which France had nearly fallen a victim ; and the present incidents occurring in France still farther manifest the dangers to arise, when executive agents cease to act in unison with the nation. History abounds in similar examples, as witness our two last kings of the Stuart race ; and cases of this description would be still more frequent, were the executive and legislative powers oftener lodged in different hands : but few, alas ! are the countries sufficiently free in their government for this to obtain in them. — But what makes the danger in our own particular case the greater, is the facility with which the fleets, which are to form our protection, may insidiously be kept unprepared, or be detained in port, or be made to elude

elude the course of the enemy at sea, or else be betrayed into his power; as well as the defenceless state of these islands, when an enemy shall once have penetrated into them. — I say nothing of the success of our *first* William, in consequence of a single victory at Hastings; for, the success of our *third* William is still more strikingly in point; as he accomplished his landing under the cover of a trifling fleet, and possessed only a trifling land force. He had indeed the acting majority of the English nation with him at the commencement; but, having disappointed those who were bigots either in church or state, the majority of the English, and, still more certainly of the Scotch and Irish nations, were found hostile to him; and yet he not only upheld the revolution itself, but at the same time supported long, bloody, and expensive, foreign wars against the most formidable power in Europe: such being the force of *possession* with respect to the executive government, and of the influence of that government over the legislature, (of which the duration had been made *septennial* with that view!) — The fears here suggested have appeared salutary to our ancestors, at various periods, and under various aspects. What was the great complaint, for example, against the Catholic religion and papal power, but that they led to a sympathy and connexion with foreigners, both in the prince and in the subject? And is it not for the same reason, that the prince

is disabled from marrying a Catholic? Why has the admission of Dutch, Hessian, or Hanoverian, troops upon British soil been a constant object of jealousy? Why are our army, the laws which regulate, and the funds which support it, each rendered subject to an annual negative from parliament? Why is our king, unless a *native*, disqualified from making any but defensive wars, without parliamentary consent? Does not every thing prove the alarm which has always pervaded the nation, lest it should at any time fall into other hands than its own? — If a dispute then should unfortunately occur between the prince and people, and if the prince should become resolute from a consciousness of foreign resources; surely, with powers previously “*exactly*” balanced, the executive government can easily open the road for weighty assistance from foreign parts, in order to enable it to turn the scale to the side of power? — This then is a *second positive argument for peace* with France, because France is the only bulwark besides ourselves to oppose to the consequences of a too close concord of military princes; — (a concord, which none are more interested to deprecate than those individuals among us, whose weight is only regarded when politics are nearly *balanced*, and whose value is only considerable in a system of *influence*, but is altogether null in a system of *force*.)

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A third positive argument, analogous to the preceding, arises from the present war being *directed against liberal systems*. The French having adopted some ridiculous popular principles, care is taken to attach an odiousness to every thing like improvement; and since many advantages result from the regal and aristocratical ingredients in our constitution, these are pretended to be the only parts of it worth upholding. Thus, liberty is fatally struck by a rebound, and power has incense wafted to it by a side-wind; thus, under false names, we are led to calumniate liberty and to caress tyranny; thus we are brought to view, without exertion or notice, the fall of Poland, and the consequent aggrandizement of the confederated princes, merely because these princes at the same time condescend to attack France; and thus, finally, the career of arbitrary power is rendered practicable both within us and without us. — From these dangerous contaminating situations, peace would soon relieve us; and it therefore ought to be peculiarly desired by those, who affect an anxiety for an *equipoise* in the British constitution; and it ought not to be rejected even by the friends of power, because this power is much more safely and wisely to be promoted by quiet measures, than by violent plans of dubious issue.

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There is *another* argument for negotiation, to be derived from the *possible danger of our seeking continental possessions*. — If attempts of this sort prove abortive, we shall experience all the disgrace, expence, and mischiefs, of a baffled undertaking. — If they succeed, we are then to ask, whether the new acquisitions are to be made for the crown itself, or for a junior branch of the royal family?

If for the *crown*, then a new familiarity must follow with arbitrary forms of government, both in the prince and in the subject; an immense patronage also will accrue to the executive power; or, in other words, new influence will pass into the hands of those, where too much influence (according to Judge Blackstone) is lodged already; a certain extension of our military establishment will moreover ensue, by which *force* will be added to an acknowledged *superabundance of influence*; and, lastly, a mixture in continental broils and negotiations, in plots and counter-plots, in alternate states of ambition, terror, and war; these and other mischiefs must fill up the canvass of our new situation. — Are we not happily situated; and can we be better than at present? After a certain compass of dominion is attained, of what use is any augmentation of it to the prince, but to corrupt him; or to the subject, but to furnish new means for his own oppression? Does not our sea-girt situation serve as a sort of armour to us; and, if we spread

spread ourselves upon the continent, does not that armour drop from us? and is it not true also, that there is a sort of congruity in empires, and that if armies are suited to such as are territorial, navies are particularly so to such as are maritime? — Besides, if we gain territory at the expence of France, in a moment of its internal distraction and foreign oppression, does it at all follow that we shall afterwards retain it? Where (as has been excellently intimated) is the ancient Dukedom of Normandy; and where our wide conquests which coasted the North and West of France, and even reached towards her center? The fame of our Edwards and of our Henrys, and our titular pretensions to France, (the continuance of which shews the obstinacy with which heraldic mummery holds to its last rags;) these are the only legacies we have obtained for all the blood and treasure lost to England in tormenting France; to whom history scarcely attributes the receipt of a single benefit from us, during our long intercourse as conquerors, to serve as a compensation for our injuries to it. England and France may be friends, but never can be happy under a common government; having agreement of manners enough for *peace*, but too much dissimilitude for *union*. — If it be said, that arrangements may be formed to give us a substitute upon the continent, for conquests made upon France: let it be replied, that, upon this supposition, we must continue in the war, at an unknown

unknown expence, till the other powers are satisfied on *their* side; that our Elizabeth long ago wisely rejected the sovereignty of the Low Countries; that Hanover has seldom served any other purpose, than to implicate us in foreign quarrels, and render us vulnerable at second-hand by continental powers; that this must be still more true of any dominion (and especially a small one) with a disputed title; and consequently that the probable end of such an impolitic and dear-bought acquisition will be either its abandonment by the national consent, or by the connivance of the executive power; (of which Dunkirk is a memorable example.)

If the new possession, thus aimed at by the war, is to go to a *junior British prince*, the pretended advantages of the conquest may be for another, and the evils of it for ourselves. We may have to perform the office of an ally; while marriage, ambition, fear, or other motives, may sooner or later produce a separation, if not an opposition of interests and inclinations. — But though *national* interests might thus be kept asunder, yet, since habitual rivals like Prussia and Austria can unite to form a *Concert of Princes* for the “honour and dignity of crowns;” it would be still more easy, in this case, for a new *family-compact* to be formed, the terms of which should be like that of the house of Bourbon, for the “views of their *courts*,” “the prosperity of their royal families,” and “the support, on every occasion whatever, of the dignity and rights of  
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"their houses." Such a compact cannot exist in words, while our constitution lasts, but it may exist in effect; and, if it is made an instrument for dissolving our constitution, it may exist afterwards in form, and with no other secrecy annexed to it, than policy with regard to *other* princes may require.

Various other considerations flow in upon us to persuade us to negotiate with France; but I find that I must reserve them for another letter.

*A CALM OBSERVER.*

*April 17, 1793.*

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## L E T T E R VIII.

*THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.*

*Published April 29, and May 2 and 4, 1793.*

S I R,

**T**HERE are several miscellaneous arguments which remain to be urged, even against the most *victorious* issue that can be expected to our war with France; but I shall incorporate them all into the following **GENERAL VIEW** of the ostensible *causes*,



conjunction with Russia, overrun the whole of Poland.

France, in the last campaign, had met with some temporary success, and being embarrassed how to profit by it consistently with her renunciation of foreign conquests, and finding herself at the same time an *universal* object of hostility, she resolved upon the expedient of a system of *fraternity with foreign people*, as a fit counterpoise to the *Concert of Princes*. — *Savoy* (which had been attacked upon the same principle on which we had attacked *Holland* during the American war) was with little difficulty at the moment incorporated with France under this new rule. — But as all rules, where the party which applies them is the party to profit by them, are naturally perverted, violence was used to detach the *Belgians* from their ancient constitution, in order to produce their union with France. At the same time, to conciliate the exasperated *Belgians* for this injury, they had the free navigation of the *Scheldt* held out in prospect to allure them. — It was the proffer of this bribe, which brought upon the carpet an altercation with *England*; who undertook, though unsolicited, to be the patron of *Holland* upon this long disputed subject. The French, who were not mistaken as to the apathy of the *Dutch themselves* respecting the *Scheldt*, now became seriously alarmed; for they had always respected both the power and the character of *England*. They were therefore to the last

last degree anxious to negotiate: — but various leading personages in England had motives of another description for checking such negotiation.

It is needless to inquire minutely after the *causes* or the *solution* of these objections; for, time has removed the *objections themselves*, as far as they are worthy of notice. — The French, for example, have mixed such absurdity and injustice with their political doctrines, that these doctrines have ceased to be infectious. The French are themselves also experimentally convinced of the folly of their plan of proselytism and fraternity; which has plunged them into immense difficulties, has rendered them universally odious or suspected, and no longer appears the philosopher's stone in politics calculated to restore the golden age. The crime of *replying* to the addresses of felicitation, received from English subjects, has equally fallen to the ground, for the same and other reasons; (and this affront indeed deserved the less animadversion, even while it subsisted, as our executive government had omitted both to punish the parties concerned in these addresses, and to caution the French not to communicate with them; as well as manifested at this period the most signal aversion to the new French government.) Lastly, the French have now abandoned the Low Countries, and of consequence the controversy regarding the Scheldt; and the Dutch do not appear averse, on their part, to absolve them from all offences under this head. We pass over the

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pretended atheism of the French nation, because, were the charge true, the evil is not to be cured by war; and, like the charge of cruelty to the King, and other charges of an *internal* nature, it is wholly foreign to our cognizance. — The objections however here alluded to made sufficient impression in England, at the moment, to end in a rupture with France;—of which I must yet rest the blame more immediately with ourselves: because, when a negotiation, which was fast ripening itself to a happy issue by concessions on the side of France, was interrupted by our withdrawing the customary and necessary safeguard to the papers, messengers, and even person of the negotiator, and finally by an order for his departure; the war, though *declared* by France, was in that stage of it really *made* by ourselves. In the midst of an armed negotiation, and of expressions the most opprobrious, and of a temper the most hostile, on our side, this interruption of the communication was not only (judging according to all precedent) a natural *provocative* to hostilities, but also almost as certain a ground for *apprehending* them, as an actual aggression; so as to leave little to France but the mere prudential consideration of the *time* of commencing the war, and the merit of a *frank public declaration* of their decision upon the subject.

Such then is the *origin* of the war in which we are engaged, and the present state of the *causes* which are said to have produced it.

As to the *nature* of the war, it is of a varied description. — First, it is to be considered as a simple war *against a neighbour*; and, in this light, it differs only from other similar wars, by being more than usually unnecessary; inasmuch as France has not only dissolved her *family-compacts* with the two houses of Bourbon and Austria; but is actually at war with each of them, as well as with other additional powers, without possessing the shadow of an ally; at the same time, that a complete distraction reigns throughout her empire. — *Next*, it is a war against the only continental power likely to *oppose, with effect, that military Concert of Princes*, by whom the independence of Europe is now more than endangered. — And the alarm hence would be universal, were not the slightest shade of democracy more terrifying to many, than even despotism or conquest. The war therefore, in the *third* place, is referable to our own *internal* situation, and may be viewed as a war against *principles*, that is, against popular authors and popular clubs; and to employ war for the purpose of attacking that, of which the consequences are so easily subdued by domestic means, is like breaking a butterfly upon the wheel. — But the war has a *fourth* aspect, namely, an interference with the *internal situation of France*, sometimes under the name of benevolence, and sometimes of chastisement. Mr. PITT has indeed, at last, made this a subordinate motive; but since,

with the confederates, it seems a primary one, it must *in effect*, in such case, be primary with us, who are merely secondary in the conduct of the war and in the arrangement of the general peace. None will doubt the sincerity of the confederates on the subject of *chastisement*; but those, who are sponsors for any *benevolence* to be found in our crusading companions, must be referred to the specimens of benevolence of these princes shewn, as well to their *own native* subjects, as to the Poles; likewise to the several manifestos of the Duke of Brunswick and of the Prince of Saxe-Cobourg; and to the celebrated *family-compact*, where the nations, ruled by the Bourbons, are literally treated as mere *nothings*, unless as being the *appendages to their thrones*. — *Lastly*, the war may become a war for *aggrandizement*; for, though I have never charged this as the plan of our administration, yet it is not wise to let their virtue run the risk of being overtempted, especially as the present ministers may be displaced by others. When a nation is strong enough (as our own certainly is, with respect to France) to *defend* itself, it is strong enough for every *useful and just* purpose; and all surplus-power only begets that presumption, by which the blood and labor of one people are spent in occasioning similar losses to another; and whether conquests in this case are really effected or are only attempted, they do permanent injury to the two people, and no less tend to corrupt their governments.

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All encouragement to continue the war arising from the consideration of its assigned causes and of its aspects, being thus alike deficient, we now proceed to a *cursor*y general view of the *positive motives* operating for peace.

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We find from experience, unhappily, that war in England is made with too much alacrity, and peace with too much reluctance; in defiance of the adage, which generally speaking is so true; namely, that the worst peace is better than the best war. — How shocking, for example, a wound appears in private life, with its concomitant surgical operations; how feelingly we deplore any case of disease; and how sincerely we pity separated relatives, where misfortune or death may befall the absent! Sleepless nights also, hunger, imprisonment, and harassing alarms; with stagnated industry, oppressive taxes, insult, robbery, devastation, fire, murder, and rape: such a catalogue as this impresses us all when exhibited in given *individual* instances. Ought not our feelings to be in proportion, then, when these evils become the *accumulated* lot of whole *armies and nations*? — Is our sympathy to abate, because, confounded with the extent and variety of the woe, we can no longer lend our attention to its particulars? and is the mischief in fact the less endured

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endured by others, because not scrutinized by ourselves? — If we should ask here, indeed, why all this mass of evil, caused by war, is voluntarily added to that which is inseparable from the lot of man? we shall find, that it is merely that some individuals may render our race the sport of fate, in order that they themselves may try the lottery of fortune. Thus we are made the *stake*, and they the *gamblers*. — And, if the parties benefited themselves in this case, one should the less marvel; but what are we to say, when we commonly perceive them, at the end of a war, restoring things, by mutual consent, to their exact original position, except what regards the immense expenditure and injury occurring during the contest. How happy, then, for us all, if our rulers had never dreamed of making use of this false road to happiness through carnage and desolation; and if they had, instead of it, availed themselves of the command of our labour, our persons, and our treasure, in order to prepare for themselves a superior gratification by pacific methods! But this would have required thought in those who prefer command; and moderation and patience in those, whose passions are irritable. — But, to cease moralizing, let us now advert to the *peculiar* motives calling for a peace with France, of which we have promised to give a general view.

The *first* argument, which I have to recall to memory, is founded upon a *new situation in modern affairs*; namely, the *certainty* with which Austria, Russia, and Prussia, can combine to assume large dominions, *free of cost and trouble*. — These potentates are masters of the grand Archimedian secret for drawing the world after them; being about to possess, for their prop or fulcrum, nearly *one million of the finest land-forces in the universe*; of which the operations are facilitated by the circumstance of the richest and the weakest parts of Europe and of the Western Asia, lying *exclusively contiguous* to them, and being *exclusively open to a land-force*. Poland, which has been “numbered “and finished,” and “weighed in their balances “and found wanting,” Poland, guiltless Poland, has proved, that these three powers have no longer occasion to wait for the *consent* of any others besides themselves; for, if they can already successfully partition Poland, this new accession of strength will enable them still more fearlessly and certainly to seize upon other territories; every new step (as in the accelerating progress of gravitating motions) adding fresh momentum to a power already irresistible. — Will Frankfort, for example, with its plebeian, and therefore proscribed, government, be more respected by them than Dantzic; or will the other fractional parts of *Germany* be more sacred than the



residue of Poland? Long has *Sweden* experienced the scandalous intrigues and insults of *Russia*; and still longer has *Denmark* groaned in secret under the weight of her more decisive commands. As to *Austria*, (to say nothing here of *Prussia*;) she has in all ages found it easy to penetrate into *Italy*; where she has already obtained an important footing; and will naturally feel tempted no longer to suffer her titles of "Emperor" and "King of the Romans" to remain dead letters. Nor can *Holland* long withstand a formidable army, (especially one capable of entering her Eastern frontier;) *Holland*, to whom the Duke of Brunswick and Dumourier have given such recent proofs of her inertness respecting foreign powers, under present circumstances. — Formidable, indeed, are the three potentates, who have thus combined to create one general prison for all mankind. They already possess some sixty millions of people, (of which more than half are in a state of progressive increase, like the North Americans,) and as many more either aid their plans, or must become the victims of their successes. *Russia*, bold and taunting; *Austria*, haughty and relentless; *Prussia*, busy and deceitful; these are the triumvirs who bestride our narrow world, and to whose *mercy* alone we may soon have all to trust. And yet *Britain*, though she sees that they are joined upon a system which goes to divide *Europe* piece-meal, stands like a waiting-lackey to serve at the repast; humbly hoping

oping that crumbs may drop from it to form her *indemnification*."

How different this from the proud times, when Britain, under Marlborough, "rode in the whirlwind, to *direct* the storm!" How different, from the nobler task of maintaining the liberties and equilibrium of Europe!—But our degradation in this respect is, if possible, outdone by our *imprudence*. Europe is, at present, by peculiar circumstances, brought, as it were, into a state of universal contact, and digested into a vast focus of intimate communication; in which, therefore, the relative influence of preponderating states is more than ever important. On this great theatre of assembled mankind, the triumvirs are the leading actors; under whom Britain, Spain, Holland, Sardinia, Portugal, and the German empire, condescend to play parts, important perhaps to the catastrophe, but, in every other respect, at once subordinate and burthenfome. The scenery, indeed, appears laid in France; but, *behind the scenes*, as it were, the triumvirs are seizing other plunder; and every year may discover some new enormity, which, by the rule of proportions, we shall be able less and less to repress. — Our slender army, our navy, (which can only undertake partial *coasting* operations, and which may every where be *eluded* by a short retreat within land;) these surely are not the means of shielding the vast *continents* of Europe and of Western Asia from the grasp of the triumvirs! — The  
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*land-force of France* is what alone can enable us to stem the mighty torrent of their armies; of France, whom it is the fashion to wish weakened and perhaps exterminated.

At present, then, the propriety of the question of peace or war, under its *foreign* aspect, is reduced to this single consideration. — Is it fit to have France only to fear, or the triumvirs? to have an occasional and feeble enemy, or a constant and deadly one? an enemy which vainly seeks to steal distant forts and factories, or an enemy which actually devours kingdoms? — In other words, if any of us had a contest with a common antagonist, and a wild beast should suddenly rush into view, would it be prudent to wrangle with the party for petty objects, and even to throw him prostrate to be first devoured; instead of making common cause with him against the common danger? — During the present century, we have lost no territory to France, even though she has been supported by Spain, Holland, and America; but have regularly gained ground upon her. On the other hand, the triumvirs have, of late years, been large and constant accumulators of power; and the observing eye can see no traces of any *returning footsteps* from their fatal den; for, if they lose any thing, it is only to one another; and their internal balance, whenever thus disturbed, is soon re-adjusted, by means of new plunder ravished from their defenseless neighbours. — What weakness then is it in us, resentfully to pursue the *ignis fatuus*

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of French politics into swamps and quagmires, without observing the flaming mass of lava, which is not only formed, but pouring forth behind us? Shall we dread the froth and foam, the noise and fury, of the wave, which beats but without overpassing the rock on which we stand; and neglect the tide of power which is silently rising to overwhelm us? Shall we be afraid of the strength depending upon fever and convulsion, and view, with unconcern, that which depends upon fixed stamina and constitutional habit? Shall we only struggle against the smaller evils which France has it *not in her power* to accomplish, and has even *ceased to threaten*; rather than against the greater ones, which the triumvirs can certainly produce, whenever they have but the inclination, and which their means of *secrecy* render but the more certain? Shall we be terrified at the *discords* of France, and not be alarmed at the *union* of free-booters; when the tritest of proverbs tells us, that the honest have always something to fear, whenever those who are less honest *agree too well*? — Besides, if we help to *dismember* France, will it not both directly and indirectly tend to strengthen the triumvirs? And, if we combat to keep France *united* under a monarch, will it not be to render her our rival again, under any new form of government with which she shall afterwards re-appear, aided perhaps by the triumvirs? Will not every succeeding proprietor of the estate struggle for the integrity of the premises, and for the re-instatement

instatement of all its appendages? and, when he has recovered what is wanting to it, will not his next measure be, as usual, to pant after fresh accessions to it, as if there had been no interruption whatever in the possession? — So that, if *foreign* politics alone constitute the foundation of the war, now that our allies are secured, every motive of a *defensive* nature seems to lead to a cessation of hostilities against France, to be replaced by a firm and watchful conduct towards the triumvirs; particularly, as the precaution on our part would encourage other powers to resume their senses, or their free-agency, and to adopt a similar proceeding.

Three *objections*, however, may arise to this comparison between France and the triumvirs, to which I shall respectively answer. — First, it is supposed, that France the *republic* is more dangerous than France the *monarchy*; or, in other words, that France, when herself rejecting all alliance, when rejected also by all allies, when transferring her allies to us, and when despising maritime systems; is more formidable to us, than is France under the very different circumstances, of being armed with family-compacts, and being capable of procuring allies to herself at will, and of extending her dominions largely beyond the seas! — Such a fear is surely *unbecoming* in Great Britain, who has even found it useful to have a rival in order to moderate her ambition; who, when not too presumptuous in her conduct, or too prospe-

rous in her condition, is always sure, in a just cause, to find allies ; and whose navy has always successfully resisted, and generally overcome, the largest collection of maritime forces ever seen upon the seas. And the sentiment is moreover *unreasonable*, if (as I will always contend) it has been in our power to incline France, the republic, to establish pacific systems both for herself and for Europe.—This general argument is confirmed, upon the supposition of the restoration of the monarchy, by its being within the power of chance, that *Sardinia should pass into the Bourbon family* ; and still more so, that the union of the Bourbon and *Austrian* families should become more intimate than formerly ; so as to render the French power more than ever formidable. Besides, the restoration of the monarchy would, *ipso facto*, throw immense weight into the hands of Austria, the immediate author and the necessary guardian of the change supposed to be effected. — However slight may be the positive influence of family-alliances between Princes, yet, since at least their negative influence is commonly not so trifling, the danger is become both ways greater than ever ; because the present increasing relationship of a few of the more *powerful* royal families, and the increasing *consolidation of territory* under them, strengthens the temptation to political unions formed on the basis of family (which was so little experienced in periods of antiquity), and renders such unions highly dangerous to the prosperity of the human race.—As to the

the evil operation of a republic upon us, in an *internal* view; if we are to judge from the circle of experience of the *last four* years in France, and from common sense; it is much more for the interest of our crown and our aristocracy, that France should have a democratic republic; which shall become disgusting to us by its proceedings, and also foreign to our imitation on account of the fundamental differences in our respective constitutions; than a limited monarchy, conducted with decency, and affording precedents and maxims sufficiently analogous to demand our adoption.—In desiring that a negative conduct may be observed towards the French republic, I trust, that no ungenerous interpretation will be made, as to my own sentiments, respecting England. I speak of the government of another country, with a view to our *politics*; and, under such circumstances, the conduct of Louis XVI. in encouraging the *democratic* parties in Holland and America, will not only furnish a precedent sufficiently *impartial* to absolve me; but prove, that in case of political struggles in this country, a French monarch possibly may not support the monarchy or the aristocracy of England with any greater zeal than is expected from the French republic.

The next objection to my comparison between the triumvirate and France is, that the *danger* from the triumvirate is so *imaginary* or so *remote*, as not to be comparable to the present danger occurring from France.—I reply, however, that conquerors

at all times have long arms; and that the very nature of a general conquest is to make itself perpetually approach to us, by the absorption of all intervening dominions; till, at last, the triumvirs shall, by a territorial progress, reach and seize the neighbouring continental shores, with all the *navy depending upon them*. Supposing France, at that period, either to be leagued with, or to be subject to, the triumvirs, our danger from France will be the very same as at present; except, that it will have all the aggravation to it, to arise from the added power and the execrable principles of the triumvirs. — But when these dangers are said to be *remote*, what is the respite of a few years to those of us, who are young or who have posterity; or to a constitution, of which we say, with such apparent fervency, *esto perpetua*? And let no frail hopes, on this occasion, be placed upon our navy or our wealth; for, beyond a certain point, as we may learn from history, the land has always overcome the sea, and iron has always mastered gold; of which the contest between Rome and Carthage has furnished the double example. — Nothing then is safe but precaution; and, if we leave any thing to fortune, we almost deserve to be left to ourselves. It will indeed be a new thing, if our *credulity* is to form our safeguard; and if no farther revolutions are to happen in the world, merely because we do not condescend to expect them. — But, as the final result of the *system of the triumvirs* ought to excite our utmost terror, let us  
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here, for a moment, review the nature of it. It is *unjust*, because it makes no more account of the consent of mankind, than if they were herds of cattle : it is *military*, and, like every thing founded upon force, must either begin or end in being brutal : it is *universal*, and therefore will soon deprive itself of the checks both of public opinion and of education, as well as of justice : it is *capricious*, because it is guided by passion, as was instanced by the Roman emperors, when maddened by the poison of power of their own preparing : it is *oppressive to every rank*, not excepting the highest, the most sacred, the most useful, nor even the army itself : it endangers the security of its own *authors and of their families*, as is found from the history of the Emperors of Rome, of Russia, and Morocco : it is *permanent*, because, when despotism, though but for a single age, stretches across the world every where to intercept truth and knowledge, and to circulate falsehood, regeneration must be slow, (owing to the *vis inertiae* of the human character, when in its degraded state :) nay, it is even *remediless*, because military powers, being always armed, and always able to assist each other with the force of their whole nations, they can easily overpower the repugnance of any single nation ; especially as the subjects of each state are not only insulated from their neighbours, but commonly separated among themselves by languages, manners, prejudices, and interests.

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The *third* objection to the statement I have made of the comparative danger of the triumvirate, beyond that of France, is, that the parties in it, who have now so easily agreed, will soon as *easily quarrel*; and thus release us again from our apprehensions. — But did not two sets of republican triumvirs successively disagree at Rome, after having first acted long enough in concert to ruin that empire? And, though the respective triumphs of the weaker of the triumvirs were short-lived, yet the despotism, established by the surviving triumvirs, lasted many centuries; and, before its effects upon Europe and mankind are yet fully worn away, we are now encouraging the birth and progress of a royal triumvirate, still more extensive than the preceding. — The secret principle of the present triumvirs is easily made apparent, and their late renewal of their connection is a proof of the force of it. They see (along with better men) the folly of an *equal* war, which ends by leaving each party as it found it, except as to the loss produced by the struggle; and, therefore, they wish to satisfy their ambition in another and more intelligent manner. Placed, as they are, in the midst of a wide expanse of weakness in their surrounding neighbours, they take as much spoil at a time as the patience of Europe at the moment permits; and, when the surprize of each act of iniquity subsides, they return to the inexhaustible banquet; till, at

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last, their gigantic powers will render superfluous their caution. — Their first robbery on Poland was no longer back than in 1773; and they would have quarrelled about the division, had not additional encroachments furnished the make-weights to poise the scales anew. At the late treaty respecting the Turks, the doctrine of *compensation and fraternity* was as regularly settled as it was in the family-compact of the Bourbons; Austria obtaining leave of Prussia to pillage the Turks, upon paying due consideration for the permission. Though several intermediate contests have chequered these proceedings, they have not, as we perceive, prevented a new partition of Poland in 1793; and, if the triumvirs quarrel again, it may only end, like the quarrels of lovers, in new fondness and new mutual indulgence. Or, if it ends in the ruin of either of them, it will only place the general mass of their power at the disposal of *two* masters instead of *three*. Great potentates, indeed, like Austria and Russia, even when at their lowest ebb, can always at least defend themselves; and, at favourable times, they can augment their dominions: but Prussia, not being of a magnitude to survive negligencies, it may fall to the lot of the remainder of Europe, in case of her distress, to fight *her* battles, in addition to their own. — But, to sum up what respects the triumvirs in a single word, let us ask, if they had just now decided to divide between them the *whole* of Poland with the whole of Turkey, what is there in

in the present state of Europe which could *prevent them*? And, after having well digested this immense incorporation of territory and power, would they not, in another encouraging moment of European folly, be enabled to make a farther similar arrangement, founded on the plunder of *Germany*? — And, this being once effected, is there any counter-combination possible, in Europe, which could stay their farther progress? — If all this be allowed to be true, then I affirm, that the *triumvirs are confessedly more dangerous than the French*.

Such are the motives for dreading the triumvirate, and such is *one* reason offered for negotiating with France, even upon the supposition of our success, and before things can have gone too far (for, it is difficult to arrest great bodies, like France, in their fall; or, like the triumvirate, in their rise.) — If we are afraid of *novelties*, in truth, and not by way of pretext, nothing can be more suitable than a policy which retains things in a position, which we have long experienced and understood, and can so easily manage. — To look for plunder, is in itself unjust; to look for the indemnity pretended to be due to us, is an unprofitable speculation, especially to an empire of a magnitude like our own; and not to seek for *security against the real and efficient enemies of all Europe*, at the present crisis, is madness. We are scarcely in time for safe measures on these subjects to-day, and we may certainly

tainly be too late for them to-morrow. — It ought, therefore, immediately to be signified by us, in some decisive manner, that the triumvirs are to obtain no *gains* whatever, for their partnership-account, out of France; a stipulation which would come from us with an ill grace, if *we* fought any such gains ourselves. — Nor should the triumvirs, if possible, be permitted, even by means of *exchanges*, to arrange their dominions in any forms more commodious to themselves than the present; because they can only desire this to *strengthen* themselves, which ought to render the measure objectionable to us. Were *their* intentions pacific, such exchanges would contribute to the general peace of Europe; but, in their present temper, it is surely some pledge, for example, for the good behaviour of Austria, to make her retain the Low Countries, under the check of England, France, Holland, Prussia, and the German empire, who are all more or less contiguous to them; and, above all, to keep them unfortified by any new barrier to be wrested from France. And, if the triumvirs are to be denied even exchanges, then, by a parity of principle, exchanges must also be denied to *us*. — And, if the triumvirs are thus denied both conquests and exchanges, and if France is appealed to while she has energy left to support us in these principles, the crusade against France will soon terminate of itself, for want of motive.

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The preceding reasonings for closing the war with France without delay, drawn from the state of foreign affairs, seem convincing; and the *constitutional* motives for the same object might be made to appear equally so; but, for the sake of brevity, I shall trust chiefly to former discussions for conviction upon this occasion. — With respect to the *Crown*, I shall only observe, at present, that, as long as the crown remains true to the nation, it must be employed in a constant contest *with the royal triumvirs*; who are proceeding upon systems utterly destructive to human happiness and security. On the other hand, if the crown comes into intelligence with these triumvirs, with a view, through their aid, to oppress our liberties, the crown must then be in constant contest *with the nation*. The former situation of the two would be by far the least deplorable for the crown; for, while the difference between one *degree* of royal power and another is small as to the real enjoyment of the possession; a reasonable share of power in the crown is also that, which is best suited to insure its own durability and tranquillity; especially, when all the improper increase of it, which the crown can obtain through the triumvirs, must afterwards rest on the hazardous foundation of *their* sincerity. — With respect to those among the ARISTOCRACY, who have a *property in some of the abuses* which are at present reprobated, and who are gratified with the present war, from a hope that it will stifle the voice

of liberty and reform ; if these persons, taking advantage of the good-humour and affluence of the nation, should commute their more objectionable privileges for solid returns, might they not afterwards fearlessly *defy* all clamor and vicissitude of public opinion, touching those privileges ? And, with respect to those of them, who have a *positive* support to offer to government, whether of influence or of talent, surely it never can be their interest, (for we speak of interest only,) to render government uncontrollable ; since, if it be true, that no subject can expect to obtain consideration for the loan of his support, where an unbridled government has become paramount over all ; it follows, that *placemen* and *oppositionists* are correlative terms ; and, therefore, that the extinction of the one implies the extinction of the other. — As to disinterested persons, if they approve of things as they *are* ; and still more if they think that the crown has acquired *too much power*, (from the late great augmentation of our dominions, of tax-gatherers, of luxury, and by means of internal managements,) it is highly incumbent upon *them* to make a stand ; lest, under the wing of the triumvirs, the crown should hereafter abound too much in force as well as in influence. Opposition are said to suffer often by crying out *the wolf* ; but the wolves will be found coming in upon us in packs, if the present savage system of the triumvirs shall gain ground ; and *as there certainly is a point existing*, when a constitution may

may become endangered, it is best to use exertion, lest this danger, which is now so apparent, should pass the reach of remedy. — To prevent any diffidence or indolence in our conduct upon this important occasion, I shall only remark, that liberty is so slippery a possession, that it has seldom lasted long, except in five situations: namely, where it has been aided by waters, by mountains, by insignificance, by foreign jealousies, or by education; that is, except where the country was such as could be defended without *standing* armies, or could not subsist unless under good government, or was not worth attacking, or found a defender, or had particular cultivation bestowed upon the minds of its inhabitants. Now, whatever may be thought of the resources of our own island and of our own constitution, it was a saying of the late Frederic of Prussia, that a respectable standing army, and twenty executioners, would soon make us a very docile people. — The MONIED INTEREST, however, may be injured by a much slihter operation than a *change of government*; for, they may thoroughly depend, that if, in consequence of war, the nation becomes over-charged with taxes, the simple honesty of Louis XVI. will not be copied; but a rough retrenchment will be made in the interest due to the public creditor; as the clamors of the monied man in future will be thought of much less moment by princes, than the convulsions of the people and the risk of a revolution. — And, if



I am right in all these arguments, nothing remains but to suggest, that, as the present war was partly made in conformity to the public voice, each individual has only to state, in the societies which he frequents, " that the war has gone far enough," in order to encourage ministers to conclude a peace.

Another reason for immediate negotiation, which is also of an internal nature, is to be found in the state of our *financial and trading systems*. — Credit, like other things, has its particular disease; namely, a tendency to a too great extension; and this disease returns, whenever a new race of people succeed, who are not to be made wise by the experience of their predecessors; consequently, the disease is, to a certain degree, periodical. But the excess of private credit between man and man has lately been joined by the excess belonging to another and *new* species of credit; namely, that which has been lately given to the paper of *country-banks*, which, in many cases, has greatly vitiated our *national circulating medium*. The war has accelerated the derangement of each of these fabrics of credit, and it has at the same time rendered difficult the remedies to be applied to our situation; especially as a general war, joined to the scarcity of neutral carriers, and the shattered state of credit (both public and private) in various places upon the Continent included in our commercial circles, has greatly injured trade. While this double bladder of trading and banking credit, above-described, remained

remained full-blown, it kept us triumphantly buoyant, and increased the produce of our taxes, and encouraged enterprises of every description; but, since it has collapsed and become flacid, we have had considerable struggles to bear ourselves up; and no complete change can suddenly occur at present, but by means of a peace; which, besides restoring confidence, shall encourage and facilitate the general production, the exchanges, and the consumption, of commodities.

There is another reason, which, in my opinion, equally relates to the high and the low, to the government and to the people, and which strongly pleads for peace: I mean, the rapid rate at which we are *spoiling our tempers*. — We have seen many persons among us of all ranks, profoundly ignorant of the state of things in France, who yet have learned to utter imprecations the most horrid against a whole nation. One is apt to suspect at times, that we are among the pupils of Caligula and Nero, when we observe men and even women, who seem desirous that the French nation should have but one neck, that themselves might serve as the executioners, and find some who would fiddle while Paris was burning. Such sentiments would certainly disgrace the reprobated country of France itself, whose misdeeds are made the pretended parent of them. — I must here add, that to deny corn to the *armies and garrisons* of France might seem justifiable, though  
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at the expence of dangerous measures towards neutral powers; but to deny corn to the *people* of France, and (like Lord Auckland) *knowingly* to favour either the creation or the operation of “*fa-mine,*” throughout a *whole nation*; seems a strange relapse into systems, from which the philanthropy of modern writers of all nations, and the softening principles of the age, had once seemed to have delivered us; especially, as the operation of famine upon the temper of a nation is seldom regular and systematic, but commonly tumultuous and uncertain; being much more likely to produce, in the present instance, the massacre of men of substance in each little community of France, than the conversion or exclusion of the present general governors of it.—But another evil to result from the spirit which has lately gone forth among us, is the inveteracy endeavoured to be established against the French nation, which tending to generate similar passions on their side, a second road may thence be opened for a return to all our mutual ancient animosity and insanity; and thus future ministers and ages may long have to rue the effects of a conduct, which will have alienated again from each other two great nations; who, as living so near to each other, are highly interested in mutual peace, the establishment of which between them would probably lead to the peace of Europe and mankind.

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Let me urge, as the last positive motive for peace, that the periods most opportune for negotiation are those of *victory*. As to war, we may just as wisely count upon the stability of the appearances of the sky in our changeable climate, as upon the prognostications of war, where the battle is not to the strong, any more than the race is to the swift. A random-shot may remove temper and ability on one side, and the wheel of fortune may turn up some eminent new character on the other; and none can deny the capability of France for resistance if combined under proper leaders.—Let us then remember the rule of the late King of Prussia in his own wars, which was, never to lose sight of original principles, and of the moderation dictated by good sense, whatever prosperity might occur at particular moments.—This rule is the more important, at the present instant; first, because France will probably be much less tractable, if she shall have seen us do our worst, and find it ineffectual; and, secondly, because an alliance of a nature so heterogeneous, as that which acts against France at present, is seldom durable, when difficulties present themselves.

I shall here end my statement of the *positive reasons* for negotiating with France, which it will be seen might easily be both extended and enforced. They have been accompanied (I trust) with sufficient temper and candour, and the last of them alone

lone admits of any doubt as to the successful issue of the war.—I shall be indulged in a few words by way of *conclusion*, and chiefly of a *negative*, and if possible of a persuasive, tendency.

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Let us not then seek for excuses, to avoid terminating so shocking an evil as war; or shew, by our being insensible of the value of peace, our ignorance of the means of improving that blessing.—If the present French government is by its very nature *fugitive*, let it pass away of itself, and let us not resist the drunkard in his fury!—If the French have combination enough to conduct a war, they have sufficient combination to conclude a peace, and it is then in vain to say, that *there is no one to treat with*.—— Shall we complain that they are *faible*, and at the same time make treaties of commerce or of alliance with Russia and Prussia, who have shewn such utter want of fidelity in *their* engagements towards Poland? Were not the Kings of France, whom we wish to reinstate, equally inclined to want of sincerity, with their democratic successors; and was it not under their government, that we first learned the reproach on *Gallie faith*?—Is it not the *interest* of all France to terminate a consuming war, and especially so, that of the *evil* leaders of France to profit by a peace? and is  
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not their *interest* in these respects, as much likely to make the oath of France sacred, as if “ Styx were bound nine times round her?” If this is not deemed enough, let us then call in all Europe to the guarantee, and use the double tie of her *own* interest, and that of *Europe*, to make a wall of brass to encompass her.

Do not let us, under the pretext of *benefiting* the French, deprive them of the right of governing themselves after their own manner, and even of trying whatever experiments they may think proper. If their proceedings shall become laudable, the *public* of the British empire can have no reason to be uneasy; and if otherwise, and if they exhibit, as of late, a nest of hissing snakes and furies, rather than of men combining for the public good; will it not serve, like another Medusa’s shield, to petrify our hearts against them; and make us duly esteem better governments, from the contemplation of the effects of bad ones? — And shall an affected sense of *religion* seduce us, when the Deity, by his own means, can protect his own cause; and when, among all the violences of the French, we are at least sure, that *Protestantism* will find harbour, if not new converts, among them? — If it is compassion that moves our modern dukes of Alva, then let us remember the remark, (which is as true as it is admirable,) that *the reign of anarchy is always short, and the reign of despotism is commonly long*; and not endeavour

your to cure a short disease by a destructive remedy. Let us rather take pains to reconcile and point out order to the French, than persist in dividing and debauching them, in order to blame and profit by disorders, crimes, and follies, of our *own* secret instigation.

Is not the royal principle of *interference* in foreign governments, as easily capable of being perverted to bad purposes, as the popular principle of *fraternity*; and therefore equally, and for similar reasons, to be reprobated? If the triumvirs interfere in the government of France, can it be for any other motive but to bend it to their own purposes; which must make the system produced at once *unnatural for France* and dangerous to *us*? Why should we place the keys of Europe in the hands of the triumvirs, when we see the evil which has arisen from placing the keys of St. Peter in the hands of his pretended descendants; for, “who will keep the keepers?”—What were the crimes of Poland and of France, which excited the notice of the triumvirs, except that they seemed to be weak, and dared to be free; in short, that they offered plunder on one side, and gave examples which might excite alarm on the other? Are not we also *free*; and shall we voluntarily make ourselves also *weak*, with these instances before us?—Do we not see that the triumvirs are already wholly out of *our* reach; but that their swelling conquests will soon place us within *theirs*? And that, in this case,  
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first the liberties of the nation will go, then of the aristocracy, and lastly of the King (whoever he should be) who shall have betrayed them? If, in the mean time, we wish to know the power of these triumvirs, in a single word, let us ask on whose *consent* they depend, and who can *control* them; that is, for example, since their *account is kept open* with Poland, who is to settle that account; and will it ever be brought to a close, otherwise than by the annihilation of Poland? And has England any *real* influence to expect in Europe, after she shall in effect have bound Poland and France to the car of the triumvirs: and, amidst all the dust and ashes that will afterwards be raised, will she be any thing better, even in her most triumphant attitude, than the fly upon the chariot-wheel?

As I have not in general supposed, in my late discussions, that the war with France will be otherwise than victorious, I must not be accused of founding myself upon false notions of the French *superiority*. For the purpose of argument, I have in general taken *every* triumph for granted that the friends of the war can wish; and have only looked *one step beyond* this supposed torrent of success, and asked, what is thenceforward to supply the chasm of France in the politics of Europe at large? and still more, what is to counterbalance its incorporation into the schemes of the triumvirate? It is *then* that we shall find, that *nec tecum nec sine te*, that *neither*  
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*with her nor without her*, is a doctrine, which ought earlier to have been considered; that there are many partial evils, which produce a general good; and that the permanent opposition of France to the triumvirs is in no shape more certain, than under that of a *Republic*.—And what is there alarming in a *domestic* view, in having a Republic in France, if it is of a nature to alienate our own people from it, and to make all their proceedings seem inapplicable to our monarchical system? And taking it in a *foreign* view, if the French dislike Kings, will not that antipathy deprive them of the resource of *family* alliances; and if at the same time they reject royal and aristocratical alliances in every *other* shape, or if their conduct and their views render other states disinclined to ally with *them*, and disposed (without *compact* or *burthen*) to co-operate with *us*; is this an evil, which we, who affect to think the French dangerous as *rivals*, should wish to remedy?

A statesman, like the god of the Stoics, should be formed of *intellect without passion*. May he then, who now guides our helm, render himself superior, not so much to his *own* passions, as to those of *others*: and, in shaping his conduct, upon this greatest of all questions which Providence perhaps ever intrusted to the decision of man, let him remember what a false step may cost to the world and to himself! However adroitly he may think to steer the vessel, which, like another ark, sustains the whole of human kind

kind; let him at least remember, that the ablest of men may *die*, even if he should not be first *displaced*; and that, if he leaves his complicated work unfinished, others may take it up, and conclude it in other modes, and upon other principles, than his own; and may thus bring upon us an eternity of evils, which every individual whatever, who is hereafter to be born, will naturally place to *his* account, as the *original author*.

*A CALM OBSERVER.*

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*Miscellaneous Extracts from a Letter published the  
3d of September, 1792.*

THE importance of a *barrier*, against the designs of a coalition of ambitious European powers, has formerly been insisted upon. — I shall only add, that, while France preserves her *present size*, she may easily prevent wars, or impose peace among such powers; and she will also more easily *incline* to do it; not only because it will then be less of an effort to her, but because it will oftener be for her interest; for, whatever are the interests of any *one* part of her dominions, she will then in turn cause to be supported by *all* the  
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other parts of them. — Whereas, divide France, and then, instead of the *whole* of it being disposed to watch the balance of Europe, \*partial feelings will arise, and only a fragment of it will perhaps adopt what might otherwise have been adopted by the whole; nay, the fragments may be contending with each other, or become a prey to other potentates, or involve *us* in their quarrels, or attend to their own affairs, instead of assisting in preserving the general tranquillity of Europe.

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Peace is evidently for the advantage of nations which are great proprietors, and perhaps not under just titles; and while pacific principles render harmless the greatest empires (as is instanced in the case of China), so peace at *present* is peculiarly suited to the interest of Great Britain and Prussia; for, if we design to pay *our* debts on our side, and if Prussia wishes to benefit by the circumstance of its having none to pay on *its* side; it is of great moment to stop a war, which will certainly liberate both France and Austria from the oppressive burden of *their* debts, and render them, as it were, renovated powers.

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But even should success in a war with France be certain, *success* itself may be dangerous. An  
overflow

overflow of prosperity, even in private life, is often more than can be borne; — but it is still more true of states, because, in states, there is a *separation of interests* kept up between the governors and governed. Independent, therefore, of the insolence, wanton projects, and consequent envy, attending an overgrown (and in our case an artificial) power; it is to be observed, that the *whole* of the *imperial* or general government of the British empire depends upon the *British parliament*, which is notoriously liable to corruption. The more, therefore, our *foreign dominions* shall increase, the more will they furnish wealth and patronage to increase such corruption; especially as the foreign dominions alluded to offer (as has been admirably observed) no means of *absorption for this fresh acquired influence* in any *local* struggle with those dominions abroad, but leave it undiminished to be transferred to operate on the side of the Crown *at home*. — The most precise courtiers and favourers of aristocracy must allow, that, from the nature of human affairs, decline follows all power left without a counterpoise (for, upon the case assumed, we should find no counterpoise *at sea*); and every lover of his country must acknowledge, that there is such a thing possible, first as uncontrolled power, and then as despotism; and that nothing can be more likely to introduce these, than successfully to run down popular principles on the one hand, and boundlessly to increase the corrupting powers of the Crown on the

the other. — It is wisest, therefore that we should remain as we are, as to foreign dominions, if we do not even reduce our present proportion of them.

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## LETTER IX.

*Published May 16, 1793.*

S I R,

**N**OTWITHSTANDING a royal sage has determined that *nothing is new\* under the sun*, the democratic government of France is said to have invented a new system of foreign politics, under the names of *profelytism and fraternization*. My present letter, however, pursuant to a former promise, will shew, that an *internal interference* with foreign states, and the *annexation of dominion to dominion* for purposes of aggrandizement, are among the most inveterate and predominant principles of long established governments. These principles, therefore, only appear novel and odious in France, because novel and despised persons have there *openly* adopted them; and, by thus placing

\* That is, in its principles.

them in a new light and position, have served, as it were, to *unfamiliarize* them to our minds.—If we prove, therefore, that the very same allies, who pretend to correct the French, on account of their late proceedings in foreign politics, are in every shape equally guilty with themselves; it will follow, that, when France meretriciously opens her arms to embrace foreign nations, none of her accusers are intitled by their innocence, to cast the first stone at the offending adultres. — As it sometimes happens, that the interference of the old governments with foreign states has been conducted by more than one potentate at a time, the co-operation of these potentates will enable us to furnish proofs of a *complete system of confraternity* in all its parts; and thus to exhibit still more extensive means for producing effect on their side, than those employed by France.

It may be thought improper by some to cite here the *family compact* of the Bourbons, formed in 1793; notwithstanding its stipulations were of such a nature, that merely for one party to *demand* aid in any war, without any assigned motive, formed of itself an obligation upon the other to afford it; and that in the conditions of the succeeding peace, as well as in the operations of the war itself, both the parties were to be considered, and were to act, as if they formed but “*one and the same power* ;” (the *advantages*, received by one of them at the peace, being held to preclude all

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consideration

consideration respecting the *losses* of the other.)— But, if the family compact be said to have been only defensive by its intentions, and to have sometimes fallen short even of being defensive in practice; it will at least serve as a proof, that many things, which are formidable in their outset, often dissipate with time; and therefore that the decree of fraternization of the Convention (even if it were not repealed) might, from its nature, become still more of a *brutum fulmen*, and less effective even than the family compact.— If schemes of this description, however, moulder away when they are attended with difficulties; yet the case very widely differs, when *success is easy*, and still more when one success promotes another; which is the precise case in the present conspiracy of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, against the rights, not only of *men*, but of *princes*.— It is also farther to be noticed, that if the Bourbon family, enlarged as it now is, by blood and by marriage, were again to be combined under one general compact; it would include France, Spain, Portugal, Sardinia, Naples, Tuscany, and Parma, as well as the German, Hungarian, Turkish, Polish, Belgic, and Italian dominions of Austria; and the members of this vast concatenation of powers, stung with the sense of past misfortunes, and tempted by the prospect of immediate acquisitions, might then exhibit a league far more potent, more active, and more indissoluble, than any family or other league which

has

has yet occurred in history. And if this mass of co-operating potentates should then enter into a still farther concert with Russia and with Prussia, the fall of Denmark and of Sweden, with all the petty segments of Europe, would be instantaneous; and nothing would be left of all the *whole* of Europe to *act* against that whole, but Great Britain. — How long, in such case, the British Empire, and still more the British Constitution, would be spared; and, if spared, by what deluges of blood, and by what expenditure of treasure, it must be effected, I leave to every honest man to <sup>12</sup>determine.

But if the *family compact* should be excluded thus from discussion here, the late royal compact, styled the *Concert of Princes*, must be admitted to be strictly within our limits; having been referred by its authors to the internal proceedings of France, as one of its chief objects; and indeed a *concerted* operation of sovereigns, which in any shape respects *domestic* transactions, necessarily implies that those sovereigns are bound to intermeddle, in given cases, in the interior of *other* countries. If we are to believe the Emperor of Germany and the brothers of Louis XVI. the above Concert was not only open to the accession of different princes, but was actually acceded to by a number of them. — But, if this be true, in what does it essentially differ from the plan of fraternization or interference exhibited by the French; except in having been prior to it, and in causing the French system to be adopted for the purpose



purpose of countervailing it. — But let us now proceed, from avowed treaties, to those *overt acts*, which are themselves as powerful evidence of the secret designs of princes, as acknowledged treaties of co-operation.

The case of *Poland* has, some time since, furnished a notable instance of confraternity in all its varieties and complications. After Russia had long endeavoured to fraternize with the Polish diffidents, (in opposition to the very party which she has since supported,) Russia, Austria, and Prussia, in 1772, coalesced in brotherly love with one another to cut off three vast portions of Poland, and then, upon the system of proselytism and fraternization, to annex them to their own dominions; leaving the rest of Poland, instantly after they had all *guaranteed* its independence, to be governed by the minister of one of the plunderers, (according to the gay confession of another of these plunderers,) as a Roman province used to be governed by its pro-consul.

By another act of confraternity between the Republic of Berne and the monarchs of France and Sardinia, the Republic of *Geneva* was new modelled.

A like act of confraternity, between the monarch of France and the Republic of *Genoa*, enabled the former to buy, and the latter to sell, *Corfica*; which the French Constituent Assembly afterwards honourably

honourably made an integrant part of France, instead of retaining it as its appendage.

A system of confraternity between certain powers in Europe (first instigated by the *monarchy* of France) contributed to divide thirteen governments in *North America* from England, and to erect a new Swiss democratic confederacy in the Western world.

A jumble of heterogeneous fraternity between the limited King of England and the Dutch Stadtholder, on the one side, and the arbitrary monarch of France and the Dutch popular party, on the other side, has twice nearly torn *Holland* into pieces; till Prussia at last mixed in the proceedings, and gave a forced and temporary unity in favour of the Stadtholder; and thereby furnished a precedent, as far as precedent can justify it, for the irruption of a brotherly swarm of French under Dumourier.

*Sweden* has been a prey to fraternity in various senses. First, the monarchy of France fraternized with its late King, to enable him to effect a Revolution in favour of arbitrary power. Next, Russia leagued with the Swedish *Nobles* against this King, just as she is now fomenting an opposition of the *popular party* to the Regent. Lastly, the late King sold his people in brotherly friendship both to France and against France, to Turkey and against Turkey, and first opposed and then co-operated with Russia; till, at last, death arrested him in his project of heading  
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the grand brotherhood of Princes against France, his former benefactor and paymaster.

I will not enlarge respecting *Denmark*, where Russian fraternity has long over-ruled the court and the nation; nor on the fraternal revolt excited by Prussia in the *Austrian Low Countries*; nor on our own design of exciting a similar revolt in *Spanish America*, had the late rupture with Spain ended in a confirmed war.—But, casting our eyes to *infidel* nations, (and without noticing any measures with the Barbary powers,) let us recall to mind the zeal of Russia and Austria to make brothers and proselytes of the *Turks*, by open force; together with the intrigues of the Russians at the Porte, in Egypt, in Persia, upon the borders of Persia, and among various Tartar nations and tribes.—Still more in point are our own proceedings in *India*; where fraternal sentiments, propagated by the sword or by bribery, have served in a few years to give us twenty millions of new relations at the distance of ten thousand miles from home.—But the *triumvirate*, which we lately formed in *India* with the Mahrattas and the Nizam against Tippoo Saib, is peculiarly instructive; for, no impartial judge of Indian politics can fail to see, that Tippoo was to the *country powers of India*, what France is to Europe, when menaced by the triumvirate of Russia, Austria, and Prussia. Extinguish Tippoo or extinguish France, and, in either case, a turbulent power indeed may fall; but with it will fall the bulwark, which not  
only

only virtually defends its weak and neutral neighbours, but even the weaker triumvirs themselves, from the prepollent members of the respective triumvirates; and whatever it is that we may be supposed likely to gain by this operation in India, yet the apparent *certainty* of that gain ought at least to alarm us for the similar consequences liable to happen at present in *Europe*, where the system will prove in opposition to our interests.

This catalogue of exploits, which have taken place towards foreign powers under old established governments; in which the parties have sometimes acted conjunctively and sometimes separately, commonly for their own interest, but occasionally from pure impartial love for the propagation of arbitrary power; may serve to counterbalance the conduct of France, whether supposed to be directed to selfish ambition, or to internal interference upon theoretical principles.—It therefore clearly shews, that the present objections towards France are to persons, rather than to things; and to the profanation of the system by impure hands, rather than to the system itself: so as to excuse an allusion to our vulgar saying, on account of its appositeness, namely, that it is safer for one party to steal a horse, than for another to look over a hedge.

But let it not be thought, because our evidence is already thus satisfactory, that we have here terminated our recital of the contradictions of the powers, combined against France under pretence of *op-*  
*posing*

posing her late system of profelytism and fraternization ; for the two most flagrant instances yet remain for observation.

The first of these is to be found in the act of confederation against France itself ; where the very correctors of the French system evidently combat their own rules ; because, it is too clear that beneficence has no share in their measures against France. Love of plunder, jealousy of the people, and the *esprit de corps* among princes ; these are its ruling motives ; for, even the British minister, Lord Auckland, in a late public proceeding, affirms, that the French revolution was detestable *ab ovo*, and in its *earliest* infancy ; (though there was a time, when all Europe might have respected it without impeachment, because it was of a *negative* nature, and merely subversive of arbitrary power.) Indeed the only fair object in France, personally interesting to its invaders, was the king and his immediate family ; and even this motive was but subordinate. To suppress liberty, and to punish presumptuous upstarts ; to form, by *means* of France, a *general fund for plunder* ; and to incapacitate, for future resistance, any residue which might be left to France, or at least to restore its league with Austria ; these were the motives of Austria, the leading confederate. — The slights, manifested on all sides to the brothers of the king of France, and the contempt shewn for men of the best blood and character among the French aristocracy, (who are  
now

now scarcely allowed the humble permission of *fighting in their own cause*,) may here serve to convince those persons, whose sensibility is reserved only for considerations of pride. — But, to those who look also to what respects *good faith*, I may cite, first, the early disavowal, by the emperor, of all schemes of conquest; which was followed a few weeks afterwards by his hint to the German empire to *dissolve the treaty of Westphalia*, and, consequently, the cessions flowing from it; and, next, the Prince of Saxe Cobourg's late self-denying declaration, equally retracted within the following days. When the Duke of Brunswick promised not to intermeddle in the internal affairs of France, this military Messiah announced, in the same breath, that he nevertheless came to place *all* their concerns at the absolute discretion of their king; that is, he would not himself manacle the *bands*, nor fetter the *feet*, of the culprit, against whom he marched; but would only throw his *whole person* into durance, that every member of it might there be bound *by others* at pleasure. — The false behaviour of the two late emperors, and the supple conduct of the present, to the Brabanters, who had justly been irritated by the emperor Joseph; too plainly confirm, that the promises of princes to *subjects* are seldom sacred where they have the power to evade them. And the same conclusion may be drawn, with respect to their engagements with *foreign powers*, from the recent conduct of the triumvirate of Russia, Prussia,

sia, and Austria, in the *second partition of Poland*; — which is the *last instance* of fraternization, on the part of old governments, to which we shall refer.

When the sovereigns of Austria and Prussia met at Pilnitz, to vow the sacrifice of their mutual resentments, every wise man perceived, that the design was not to abandon their ambitious views, but merely to vary their object; and that some considerable change would soon be attempted in Europe. The junction of Russia made their projects, whatever was the nature of them, still more feasible than ever. On the side of *France*, indeed, the attempt has been attended with considerable struggle; — but *Poland* had nothing to oppose to these triumvirs, besides the feeble tie of their *own* engagements towards her. The crime of having wished to secure her independence by a free constitution, though encouraged by Prussia, was punishable even in the eyes of Prussia, as soon as Prussia was interested in rendering her a weak enemy, rather than an efficient ally; and the contagious example of freedom, which she was exhibiting, was now to be exterminated by a new partition. In the course of this second partition of Poland, Russia has taken for her share nearly three millions and an half of people, included in a line from Dryssa, (between Dunaburg and Polock, on the Duna,) in the North, to Kaminiac in the South, (opposite to Chockzim upon the Dniester;) forming the *whole of the East-*

*ern side* of Poland. Prussia, for her proportion, has had assigned to her a waving line to the *Westward*; which, passing close on the West of Warsaw, joins Silesia to her dominions on the Baltic; comprehending Great Poland, and nearly one million and an half of people. This, with the former depredation of the triumvirate, constitutes nearly two-thirds of Poland, as it stood in 1772; leaving the share of Austria, upon the present occasion, *still to be accounted for*. — In the mean time, the residuary existence of Poland, *as Poland*, still remains problematical; especially as the enemy continues to overspread the undivided remnant. — As to pretexts for acts so unjustifiable in themselves, so unprecedented in history, so contrary to treaty, and perpetrated in the midst of the *most profound peace*, there can be none. In the manifestos of Russia and Prussia, which are before the public, the parties speak for themselves, much as the wolf in the fable talks to the lamb. Insult, misrepresentation, and injustice, run through the whole; and the only difference is, that, of the two, the Prussian manifesto, which ought to have observed the most delicacies, has observed the least.

The case of Poland is the more flagrant, as the triumvirs have there acted the parts of “*false brothers*,” both to its unhappy monarch and to the elector of Saxony; each of whom they have in succession robbed of a throne. The elector of Bavaria and the Duke of Deux-Ponts would have had  
 similar



similar complaints to prefer against the late emperor Joseph; had not Prussia and Hanover interfered, and set on foot the German league against Austria, since virtually annulled. — If we should ourselves now be found countenancing any projects respecting Bavaria, hostile to its present or future sovereign, or to the balance of Europe; it will then appear that our pretexts, urged respecting the present war with France, are false; and that we are ourselves engaged in a *war of ambition*, to which the security of Europe, and the rights not only of nations, but of all inferior *sovereigns*, are to be sacrificed. But let us rather hope, that our ministers are engaged in a mistaken, than in a profligate, pursuit; and that they are still widely remote from being implicated in the crimes and hypocrisy of the triumvirs.

To conclude. — The various transactions, referred to in this letter, (of which the recital, however necessary, may perhaps appear barren to the reader,) at least sufficiently prove that the French system, with regard to foreign nations, is not *rara avis in terris*, but is only an old system under new names. — A few miscellaneous *remarks* of a more interesting nature remain to be urged, respecting those transactions, which will immediately be presented in another letter.

A CALM OBSERVER.

May 13, 1793.

LETTER

L E T T E R , X.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Published May 21 and 23, 1793.

S I R,

I have engaged to offer some miscellaneous remarks, suggested by the *foreign* proceedings of the chief of those old-established governments, which are now confederated against France; and this I shall do under several distinct heads.

1. I must observe, generally, on the subject of *the interference of one state in the internal concerns of another*, that one state never can feel for another as it does for itself; and, therefore, having its *own* interest for its principal guide, it will frequently seek to injure its neighbours, under pretence of serving them. Besides, foreigners rarely understand either the sentiments or the interests of other countries. Arbitrary princes, likewise, never make the subjects of their own dominions so happy, as to encourage their being intrusted with the management of other nations. Lastly, since most governments are arbitrary, we may judge *a priori*, that the usual leaning of these governments, in critical times, will be to render arbitrary principles more and more

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prevailing. — But, as these may be thought negative considerations with respect to the subject before us, I shall urge affirmatively that every state has a *right* to possess a constitution, which is either expressly or tacitly approved by a majority of such persons *within* itself, as are capable of giving a just and disinterested judgment in public affairs, or, at least, of selecting persons proper to perform this office for them: (though I confess, at the same time, that prudence often, and indeed commonly, renders it necessary to wave the active exercise of this right.) If governments indeed are held to depend upon any other basis, than one which is *internal*, what must be the conduct of a people remote from all neighbours; or of a people placed among neighbours with conflicting opinions? — But, if the basis of government be internal, it must either rest upon blind *chance*, or upon *arbitrary will*, for its origin, support, and improvement; or else we must allow, as before, that it ultimately resides in a *majority* of persons of some description or other within a state, (who yet, I repeat, will generally do most good, when they conduct themselves with most reserve.) — This theory, or *rationale*, upon the subject of the interposition of one state in the domestic concerns of another, may be held liable to the following objections, as applied to the combination against France.

First,

First, it may be said, that the *being at war* with another state furnishes a legitimate motive for interfering in its domestic government. — But admitting this to be true, where the cause of the war is just and important, and where such interference is indispensable to the general safety; yet it still will be necessary to shew, in the present instance, that the constitution, which is to be suppressed in France, is more dangerous to us in a foreign view, than the constitution which his proposed to be upheld; and that the change projected will not only be practicable, but will be permanent, and answering to the cost. — With respect, however, to the original confederates, it would be more than reasoning in a vicious circle, if a war, *begun* by them upon a principle of *wanton* interference, and which may be terminated at pleasure upon fair conditions; should be held to be *that* sort of war, which *of itself* warrants an interference in the domestic politics of the French.

But the *French*, it may be said, *began* this war; and therefore deserve *punishment* for it. — To this I reply, that this is a mere question of chronology. In the commencement of the revolution, the detestation of the old wars, caused by the monarchy, greatly contributed to the revolution; while the new government resented no insults whatever (among the many they received) from foreign powers, but used a temporising conduct, till the winter of 1791-2; when they first testified their

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dissatisfaction

disatisfaction at the alliance with Austria. It was chiefly the fear of losing this alliance, in consequence of the *pacific* sentiments prevailing in France, joined to the relationship of the Queen, which led Austria to endeavour to change back the French government from a *national* to a *personal* form. — I must farther add, that had not the refractory party in France (and the case was the same in Poland) been countenanced by foreign governments, every one concerned probably would soon have acquiesced in the revolution. It is also likely, had the revolution been allowed to proceed more quietly, that the democratic party in France never would have acquired their present sway, nor have given room for foreign powers to encourage their excesses in order to render them odious and ridiculous. — And, if this be so, then I say that *foreigners* are the great cause of what has happened wrong in France; and that till the French spirits were mounted by the proceedings of almost all foreign governments against them, they never took measures against foreigners: — This then is the point of view in the French proceedings in foreign affairs, which throws every thing into perspective; so as to shew that the French, in this respect, have been more sinned against, than sinning.

But benevolence, it may next be urged, requires this war to be pursued, in order to remove, by means of "*cautery and excision*", those new principles, upon the subject of which all Europe is at  
 "issue."

“ issue.” — Why then will the framers of this objection forget here those golden words, that *the reign of anarchy is commonly short, and that of despotism commonly long*? Experience in all unfortunate concerns is a powerful remedy; for, as Sterne says, an ounce of a man’s own sense is worth a ton of that of other people; which is eminently true of the French; who are a peculiar nation, little understanding, and little understood by others, and who can alone succeed in convincing themselves. At present, the French may say (and their posterity after them), that their evils do not flow *from liberty*, but from the *enemies* or false friends of their liberty: consequently, even should a new government be forced upon the French at the present instant, there will still be a standing motive left for their attempting another revolution; a motive, which will be inflamed by the natural violence of their conquerors, and which will soon find some opportunity for exerting itself, such as dearth or foreign war. Opprobriously as we may think of the French proceedings, yet (as the Scripture tells us) the dog will return to his vomit: and, to shew the ease of such attempts in a large empire, I have no need of referring to Sicilian vespers; but only to the extensive revolt now raging along the Loire, notwithstanding the present French government has at least 400,000 men in its pay and the majority of the *nation* in its favour. Should the only result, therefore, of foreign interferences be to create

a war to convulse Europe, and then, after a shocking interval of foreign tyranny, to place the French in a situation in which they will have to renew the whole of their *revolutionary process*, there seems but little gained for humanity; especially as this cruel expedient tends in other views to introduce new dangers of a *foreign* description into the system of Europe, and to produce every where *internal* evils, far more incurable, than those arising from the ravings of the Jacobins; the Jacobins, who are easily to be foiled every where by domestic remedies, were they not of themselves (according to a happy expression) “arrived at that maturity of corruption, at which the worst examples cease to be contagious.” — We now proceed to our second general remark.

2. Are the triumvirs properly qualified to arrange the government of France or of any other foreign country? I answer *no*, on account of their horrid principles. Any power which says, *I am not content with my own dominions: or which says, having proscribed liberty at home, I will persecute it every where, lest it should steal upon me unawares*, ought to excite jealousy, in proportion to its means of mischief; and these means are certainly formidable, when seconded by the principal powers in Europe. To such powers the superintendence of our *internal* government is as little to be surrendered, as our *external* security. — For, hear what these powers

ers declare! It is this: " France must be governed  
 " by one man; and, if he is aided by counsellors,  
 " it must depend upon his consenting to such; and  
 " Poland, in the mean time, must be made over  
 " to us; since, if we allow her to retain a free  
 " constitution, it will seduce our subjects." —

And what these powers declare, they *execute*; for, they actually divide Poland, and they seek to divide France; because it answers the double purpose of plunder and of quenching liberty. — Would they not, then, for the same double reason, divide the British empire?

3. The Concert of Princes (as exemplified by their confederacy against France) avowedly establishes a system of intercourse between princes, in order to keep in awe their respective people; and thus to make *profelytes* to their arbitrary government by force. But, avoiding *popular* topics, and seeking chiefly to suggest hints to those, who have weight in public affairs; I shall ask, under this head, if the triumvirs should acquire a *carte blanche* over Europe, what is to become of our ARISTOCRACY here? — Suppose any thing like the system of Russia, for instance, to prevail here; has any one ever heard of a burgage-tenure borough in Russia returning legislators to a senate; and would our rotten boroughs either continue, or, if extinguished, be compensated for in the manner proposed by Mr. Pitt, should a government by *one*



person be introduced by *foreign* means? — Where are the nobility of Russia? Are they not banished to Moscow, by discontent, or to Siberia, by despotism; and replaced by upstarts at court, and by the favourites of these favourites? Is there a popular minister, a popular party, a public, or any room for generous ambition to be expected, under a system, where fame never brings any man forward to the public eye, unless by his misfortunes, or unless he is an active instrument of the power of the despot? — What are the clergy, in these countries, but men paid to hoodwink and to tame their flocks; for which those are most qualified, who are most abject and ignorant: and on whom, therefore, wealth and luxury would be more than wasted; for, *ut populus, sic sacerdos*? — As to their army, it is a band of slaves to control slaves, one part of it being awed by another part; and, while its officers are devoid of the generous *incentive* of hoping that when they spill their blood, it is commonly to secure some public advantage; so the few of them who feel, have the melancholy sentiment that every drop, shed by themselves or by those they vanquish, goes to cement the misery of mankind, both at home and abroad. — What are the traders and •artists, in these countries, but foreigners, the pupils of foreigners, or else mere nullities? — Can there be a monied interest, where there is no justice? can there be a permanent corporate body under a capricious government? or can any one thing regularly

larly prosper in a country, where the moving spring is the *passion* of an individual, of whom the policy is to weaken every thing which can rival him or discompose his fastidious ease? — Such then is the change, which must naturally sooner or later follow, from encouraging the Concert of Princes; and enabling them to play into one another's hands, for the purpose of extinguishing liberty: for, to make sovereigns despotic, and still more to make *many* of them so together, is to give them into the keeping of their passions; and, as passions, which are indulged daily, become viler and viler, the despotism of Europe would soon resemble that of Asia; and, at last, copy the rankness of that of Africa itself, of which we so justly complain. — Surely, then, the fable of the *hen with the golden eggs* is lost upon our aristocracy, when they favor undertakings which threaten the *fee-simple* of their privileges, and when they give their *present* support so as to hazard their future power. — And let it not be thought that I charge the picture too high, when I thus talk of what would happen under a system of legislation corresponding to that of Russia; for, that of the Austrians and Prussians would give no better quarter. Let us remember, for example, that, though the *exterminating* part of the Duke of Brunswick's memorial was explained away by some; yet, the great *motive or object* of the manifesto, namely, to make the *whole* power in France depend upon the will of one

one man, was done away by *none*; though, on the contrary, the prince of Saxe Cobourg's declaration for a *constitutional* king was anxiously retracted in three short days. — Let the possessors of fictitious and litigated rights, therefore, recollect that their existence depends on a sort of mediocrity in liberty; that the profit of many of them arises from wearing the *mask* of the people; and that the rest will be nothing, as soon as the crown (whether worn by a native or foreigner) is made every thing. — Walking, as they do, upon a narrow plank, let them beware, lest, by shunning too much the popular danger on one side, they fall into the gulph of despotism on the other; a gulph, whose waters will soon change into blood; and, if a few things of straw float upon its surface, *apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto*, like the ruins in Virgil's shipwreck.

If the hazard of arbitrary power, therefore, in any country, is great, from the internal power of the sovereign, when unassisted from without; the danger redoubles, and still more the *evils resulting from it*, when princes come into fellowship with one another; and render the *hydra with many heads* no longer the monster of fable. — *Union between nation and nation* is proved neither to be easy nor acceptable; but union *between princes* is not only easy but fascinating; for, it secures their power at home, and renders foreign acquisitions more expeditious than by the mode of conquest: and, now that princes have learned this fatal secret, it is more  
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than ever necessary to be watchful, as well for our *privileges* as for our *liberties*; and to take care, in England particularly, that we perish by *neither* end of the constitution, the court or the mob.

4. But a specific consequence is likely to arise from the Concert of Princes against France, and from the combination of the triumvirs against the world; which I here think it important to detail at considerable length.

The insular situation and the strength of Great Britain have so much withdrawn our jealousy from any except the maritime powers, that the first and second partions of Poland have rather been reprobated among us in a *moral* than apprehended in a *political* view. But if we are too self-confident to fear the triumvirs at home, I think I shall at least succeed in creating a jealousy respecting one of them abroad, by displaying the dangers with which Russia threatens our *East Indies*; chiefly by means of her Polish acquisitions, the discords of France, and our own imprudence.

If the wars against the Turks have not put Russia into the possession of large tracts of country, they have at least given her important posts and a necessary experience, and broken the spirit of the Turkish forces as much as they have animated that of her own. But the territories, which were omitted to be retained by her out of her conquests in the field over an *infidel* power, have been more than made  
up

up to her by her frauds in the cabinet against a Christian power; *Poland being made to pay the whole of the forfeit for Turkey.* The Russians having formed their posts and marine establishments in the quarter of the Black and Caspian Seas, it only remained to add provisions and stores, and to secure rivers, by which to convey such from the countries producing them. — This has been effected by means of the two successive partitions of Poland; which have given to her the entire corn-countries of the Ukraine, and whole provinces of forest and pasture, together with the course of all the rivers East of the Danube. The obstacles to the Russian arms from a barren frontier in Asia, and from a difficult country in Europe, have now wholly vanished; and Russia is brought close to Constantinople without one intervening fortress to oppose her. This celebrated city, which is chiefly strong to a maritime invader, is no longer so to an enemy disembarking near it, to attack it by land. — But what is still more important than this, is the consideration, that the Turks are not only an exhausted, self-dissolving power; but are, in fact, scarcely to be called a *nation*, but are rather to be held as the remnant of the *conquerors over various nations*; being very few in number, compared with the extent of their empire. If the Russians therefore once possess the *central source*, from which the population and power of the Turks have chiefly flowed, little effort will be requisite for completing the conquest

conquest of Asia Minor ; aided, as the Russians will be, by the Greek Christians who swarm throughout the Turkish dominions, and by the dejection into which past defeats, well known traditions, and the want of European allies, will drive the Turks. And while all history, on the one hand, proves the ease with which Asia Minor may be over-run, when *attacked* with superior vigor ; the history of the Crusades has demonstrated, on the other, that the whole of Europe will in vain exert itself for *ages together* to subdue it, when *defended* with a like vigor. This then opens the road of Russia to India by the *Persian Gulph*.—The facility with which a rabble of Mamalucks may be expelled from Egypt, by a regular fleet and army, or may be bribed with the pillage of Turkey to surrender it, leaves no doubt about the practicability of a passage to India by the *Red Sea* ; (for, whatever was the fact on this subject respecting the ancients, the talents of modern engineers may, in a single year, float a Russian squadron with transports, across the isthmus of Suez to the Indian Ocean.) In the hands of Russia, also, the Black and Caspian Seas, and the southern course of the Indian rivers, will be important articles, in the shape of water-communications.—But, water out of the question, India is open to Russia by *land*. Asia always has been the seat of wide and rapid conquests, in which the Tartar and Persian cavalry have always formed principal ingredients ; and, with respect to India in particular, Catharine will seek

seek not to be inferior to Genghis Khan, to Tamerlane, or to Kouli Khan ; (to say nothing of other mighty conquerors in other parts of Asia, both ancient and modern.) To be herself singly, then, the Semiramis of the North and of the South, of the East and of the West ; to render Asia more of a family possession, than America has been to Spain, while she deceives and mocks all the potentates of the earth ; such is her proud ambition.

Let me here pause and ask, what have we to oppose to this *reasoning* ; and, if the reasoning be good, what have we to oppose to the *progress of Russia* ? I believe but little : but that little will seem far less, when we consider what follows.—Russia already abounds in men ; and her conquests will give her more, provided she has objects of plunder to present to them. The North, which is full of fastnesses, and is hardy and poor ; will fight against the South, which is rich and open as to country, and feeble and timid as to inhabitants. Our chief fortresses in India lie towards the maritime frontiers ; and inland, (where the most danger lies,) we possess little besides stations for petty corps of troops to protect our tax-gatherers. To keep in order twenty millions of people we have an army of natives, and less (I speak at hazard) than fifty thousand Europeans of every age, sex, and profession, including soldiery. Thus circumstanced, we seek by actively favoring the present combination of European powers against France, and in be-  
half

half of the triumvirs, to be instrumental in introducing a power into the neighbourhood of India, which is in the train of commanding the means of attacking India by land and by sea; which can waste fifty thousand of its forces annually, for a number of years successively, with ease; and can always be a *campaign in advance* upon us in India, because distance will conceal her preparations, and she can always begin to operate when our season for passing the Cape of Good Hope terminates. If we are always to remain armed in India against this power, we shall waste one of our boasted resources for domestic uses, namely the revenue acquired out of India, back again upon India; and send much of our own revenue into India to accompany it. If war, at four thousand miles distance in America, was ruinous, must it not be still more ruinous, when removed to the distance of ten thousand miles?

Let us then beware of exalting Russia and Austria, and depressing France. The two former powers seem likely to be omnipotent to the Eastward, whenever they act with united force; and if Russia should grow too large to be wielded as a single empire, its operations will be little impeded by being divided among the issue of the present empress upon a system of confederacy.—As to France, her islands will give us only *one* million of people, and will render every one jealous of our navy, and send every nation to the free parts of Asia for sugar, coffee,



coffee, and cotton. Let us then, looking to *twenty* millions of subjects in India, leave to France her islands, as the nursery of a certain proportion of navy; let us also leave her old possessions in the Indian seas to her, to secure her *interested* attention to that quarter, where the Russians may so soon threaten every thing; for, nothing can be more important to us, in such a predicament, than to have the French for our co-operators, on account of their proximity to the Levant, as well as the power of their land-forces. — If these schemes be said to be novel, let us answer in one word, so is our own situation; and it would be wonderful indeed, if old systems should answer for new positions. — But how it can be wise upon *any* system, to throw France into the vortex of the triumvirate, and to prevent her having an *independant constitution, uninfluenced by dangerous family connections*, possessed as she is of such powers for serving, and such means for injuring us; is beyond my little talent to unravel. Do not our history and our national prosperity each prove, that, since the time of William the Conqueror, France has never been able once to hazard our existence; but, like a teasing fly, has only produced in some cases a salutary movement and exertion; or like a *remora*, in others, has operated as an useful check to the vivacity of ambition. — But in any event, agreeing, as I have formerly done, with much of what ministers had in view at the time of the Russian armament; I cannot but wonder at *their present*

*sent* measures. If they cannot indeed successfully *obstruſt* the triumvirs, yet, at least, I can see no reason for their positively aiding them; and if Oczakow was important as a key, surely the new tracts, which Russia has obtained from Poland, serve as a lever to turn and to render useful that key; and if Oczakow and Russia, which are distant, were to be deemed important, so must Poland and the *Concert of Princes* be, which touch still nearer upon us; unless ministry consider the *balance of power*, as mechanics would do, and suppose that weights are to have effect, in proportion as they stand remote from the center.

5. Promises, in public affairs, seldom form a good political security; it being thought a mark of ingenuity, by politicians, to be able to deceive; stratagems to betray mankind being nearly as common in the closet as in war, and held almost as lawful. — Crimes also seem as little scrupled as falsehoods. — Having formerly discussed the conduct of Prussia with this view, let us look, for our present confirmation, at what has passed on the part of *Russia*, in the Crimea, in Turkey, and in Poland.

By the peace of Kainardgi, in 1774, Russia made the *Crimea* “independent” of Turkey; and then she plotted against this independence; having debauched its khan, Sabim Gheray, whom she poisoned for a short time in Russia, then abandoned to the eccle-

mosynary favours of the Poles, and at last unfeelingly saw return to Turkey, ultimately to meet the fate of his apostacy, namely, poison or the bow-string. The Crimea, thus so generously made *independent*, was soon, by the forced cession of the Turks, converted into a Russian possession; and its native inhabitants were nearly all massacred or expelled by their good brothers the Russians, in order to furnish a clear field, a sort of *tabula rasa*, for adventurers to settle there, under Russian auspices.

Various other connections or dominions of *Turkey* were equally the subject of the machinations of Russia; whose mandates went even to the change of governors, and to other glaring measures of "*internal policy*." Yet, in spite of all this, in the war-manifesto of 1787, the empress says, "our interrupted love of the peace and quiet, *which constitute the happiness of the human race*, is apparent; as is our *condescension* also, in the means which we have employed without success, for maintaining a good understanding with the *Porte*."

*Poland* also, in its turn, has been blessed, like the Crimea, with Russian protection; and with similar consequences; for, it was robbed of a large portion of its dominions in 1772, with the comforting assurance, that at least its residue should be "*independent*," under the triple guarantee of the partnership which had plundered it. Poland, in fact, remained

remained without undergoing any farther partition, for the term of twenty years, of which political jealousy was the chief reason; but it was governed in the interim, by Russia, like a dependent fief.

The same revolution which had *withdrawn* France from foreign concerns, having, by a singular reverse, caused a *jealousy of her in foreign countries*; Russia saw in this situation a double reasoning for renewing her intrigues, because they had thus a double opportunity for success. — To alter the established course of a government, to force nobles to retreat from the seat of public affairs, to violate (to use her own phrase) the person of “The Lord’s anointed;” these were crimes in the French, which she so loudly reprobated, and with such pious zeal; that some of the very princes, who were apprized of certain of her *own* proceedings, believed in her sincerity. With a view to render the farce still more colourable, she dispatched a minister to Coblenz, gave money to the emigrants, caressed the French princes and aristocracy, affected to persecute other Frenchmen, and circulated universal rumours of her intention of *embarking in the French crusade*. — In the meantime, without contributing a single soldier or sailor to this crusade, she inundated Poland with her troops; and (though defended by an army thrice as numerous as that, which usually defends our own island) Poland in a few weeks was obliged to surrender at discretion; especially as Prussia (proh pudor,)

pudor,) Prussia, her Mentor in her new government and her ally in her new career, gave intimations, that she was in the Russian secret, and that some fatal sentence had been jointly and irrevocably pronounced. Russia and Prussia, two of the three co-guarantees of Poland, at length explained their intentions; which were, that Poland should again be thrown into the melting-pot, and again furnish each of them with a bribe for their tender mercy, in not taking the whole of it. — The will of Austria is still kept back in awful silence.

But Russia does not pause here. Her ambition is amphibious; she must be great by land and by sea, and shine both as an European and an *Asiatic* power. Trusting, therefore, that she has contributed to throw Europe into a long scene of confusion, she is preparing a *new* war against Turkey; and, as the best prelude to it, she continues her courteous assurances of her desire of a good understanding, and of her love for the peace and happiness of the human race. In the mean time, every appearance of armament on her side stands attributed to the state of Europe and of France; though as her only wish is to *prevent a general peace*, it is her secret aim, that, while she makes every semblance of favouring the crusaders, the French may be able to protract their resistance to them.

In short the conduct of Russia is in every respect so flagrant, that I cannot quit it without some farther comments and hints, which I think instructive

at this juncture. — First then, when the Russians entered Poland, in May, 1792, the *commencing words*, the *Evolve, Evolve*, of her manifesto, were “*Independence and Liberty*,” “the unsullied preservation of which precious attributes of the political existence of Poland,” together with “the integrity of the rights and prerogatives of the illustrious Polish nation,” were proclaimed as her constant objects, in which her “former engagements” also concurred. So much for professions, of which the above is a literal transcript. — Next, Russia has lately signified to the Poles, that all her interference in Polish concerns has been founded on the “*reciprocal interests*” of the two countries, as neighbours; and that thirty years have proved this neighbourhood to be a burthen, (on account of her immense expences,) without having prevented the disorders of the republic. We have thus a full confession of the fraternizing principles, during *thirty* years, of an old government, which, like a good-natured lawyer, has thrust itself, unasked, into the concerns of others. But did Russia expect that any *one* government should do justice, in fellowship, to *two distinct* nations? Certainly not; for the double reason, that the thing is in itself impossible, and that she only intended to serve her own ambition. — Here, then, it is important to remark, that the motive, in Russia, for all this turbulent conduct, is nothing else but *to be talked of*. And here it is that I shall digress a mo-

ment to notice a particular in which historians highly deserve censure. The minor objects of morality are well enough understood by historians, and satire is not wanting in courage to chastise the violations of them. But the larger lines of morality, which belong to government and to nations, are scarcely yet seized by them. They look out for events, without relation to principles; they seek to interest us, rather than to instruct us; and, conceiving that princes are privileged to commit crimes, their practice is to make these brilliant. Thus princes think that it is not necessary to serve mankind, but only to astonish them; and that success renders every thing innocent, and even laudable. Would to God that some man of superior talents would undertake, in an enlightened manner, a history of modern Europe, (a work in every view much wanted,) where battles should figure less than philanthropy, where men should be praised for the good and not for the mischief they do, and where we should be told not only of what is done, but (in an occasional manner) of what is left undone! It is thus that princes, not only from standing in awe of history, but from being really informed by it, may finally come to deserve its honest praises. — But to return to our subject. The last comment which I shall make in this place, respecting Russian politics, is, that it is inexcusable in us to think that events, secretly menaced from that quarter, are *not to happen*, because they are in their nature *surprising*; though,

though, at the same time, we know that extraordinary events must fall out within *some period or other*; and that in no period have they more abounded than in our own, which has witnessed the progress of Russia and Prussia as it were from their cradles, the marked declension of Turkey, the important revolution of America, the successive partitions and the revolution of Poland, the revolution of France still stranger than all the rest, the armed neutrality, the Concert of Princes, the fate of the Catholic religion, the navigations of the admirable Cook, and the magic of modern artists and natural philosophers. Let us, then, with these preparatives, look steadfastly at Russia; and, judging of what she both dares to do and can do, by what she *has* done, let us count all her promises and pretences for nothing; and try her by those data, which can *alone be submitted to our knowledge*, previous to the execution of her projects. If after this criterion shall have been employed, what I have said respecting the probable aims of Russia against Turkey and the East, including India, shall fail to impress; then either the reader or myself must be unfortunate; though my earnest prayer is, that peace or the independence of France may (to the deep confusion of Russia) make his opinion of the two appear the better. — For myself, when I recollect the mode in which the Empress acquired and (to the prejudice of her son) still retains her crown, the spirit of her long reign, her journey to Cherson to be there inaugurated by anticipation in her *Greek or Eastern*



*Empire*, the ridiculous deceptions put upon her in the course of that journey, the Greek names given to her grand-children, and the temper of her daughter-in-law, joined to the preceding circumstances; I say, when I recollect these things, I cannot doubt of what is and what will continue to be the temper of the Russian *court*, with regard to the Turkish dominions, and to Asia generally; and that it is, in the utmost degree, \*important for Great Britain to watch the whole with unceasing attention; that, at least, by a *negative* conduct, we may save ourselves from mischief, and return to that happy indifference to continental affairs, in which in general we may so safely indulge.

6. My next attention will be given to the comparison of the principles of *monarchies* and *republics*, as to the subject of mixing in the affairs of *foreign* countries.

History, I believe, will justify our laying it down as a rule, that monarchies are almost always ambitious, and republics only frequently so; of which the reason is clear; for, the monarch, (in this single respect,) *identifying himself with his nation*, thinks, that all its increase goes to his own aggrandizement; and, therefore, he is commonly engaged either in intrigues or in wars, (especially as state-secrecy generally serves to cover his projects.) Republics, on the other hand, are only belligerent and intermeddling, according to their objects, their  
structure,

structure, and their situation. — But, farther, if princes have occasionally abdicated or called in partners to their *thrones*, (of which they have generally repented,) perhaps, in no instance, unless in favour of their relations, have they, while living, voluntarily *divided their dominions*. Notwithstanding, however, the various objections to republics, (and they are considerable in the present state of mankind,) yet we must allow, that many of the ancient republics permitted *independent colonies* to issue from their bosom, as swarms issue from a mother hive, without pursuing them with any claims of *supremacy*; and the American republics, in various instances, have even parted with territory and people close adjoining, allowing them to become independent states; and have then admitted these offets to a proportional weight in their general confederacy. — It is my own opinion, that France, with our encouragement, would no less have delighted in a pacific and domestic system than America; but, taking her as she stands, and without adverting even to the inquiry as to the priority of provocation respecting the present war, I am ready to compare her conduct with that of Russia, upon the subject in question.

For example: France, in the case of Savoy, talked of an *aptitude* in the two nations for union; and, in like manner, the Empress, in her manifesto of 1792, tells the Poles, that they were a nation, “ whose identity of origin and language, and many  
“ other

" other circumstances of relationship with the na-  
 " tion she governed, had rendered *interesting to her*  
 " *eyes.*" — Again: the French, in general, have  
 paid for their supplies in Belgia; though, by the  
 laws of war, Belgia was, in part, to be considered  
 as a conquered country; but, the Russian army,  
 which, without any legitimate pretence, entered  
 Poland, immediately exacted magazines from the  
 inhabitants; then sold those magazines for private  
 emolument, and ended in living at free quarters. —  
 Next: the French, within their *own* country, have  
 forced a general oath upon every person; but, the  
 Russians, in a country which is *not their own*, have  
 imposed an oath, even upon the clergy, (of whom  
 the majority are not of the Greek communion,)  
 and have given only three months to refractory  
 landed proprietors to sell their estates in a glutted  
 market; to say nothing of their overthrow of all  
*municipal and other law.* — If the French, likewise,  
 are accused of examining travellers, and of erecting  
 a system of passports and arrests; surely, in case of  
 a civil war, either in Russia or in the dominions of  
 any other of the confederates, travellers and resi-  
 dents would not find more mercy than at present is  
 found in France; for, more is scarcely shewn, in  
 these countries, even in peace. If this be denied,  
 let us refer to the sad tenants of Siberia, and to  
 La Fayette, to explain the difference. — Finally:  
 to shew at least the *parity* of the French and their  
 opponents, even as to the affixing *classic names to so-*  
*reign*

*raign territories*, we may observe the Crimea decorated by Russia with the name of *Taurica Chersonesus*; as would the Netherlands have been with that of *Austrasia*, had they been exchanged lately for Bavaria. This last instance of coincidence of conduct would perhaps be too trivial to notice, were it not in order to observe, from it, the fascination of *names*, and the possibility of their occasioning momentous *events*; such, for example, as the attempt to renew the *Eastern and Western empires of antiquity*, in favour of the *two* sovereigns of Europe, who, by their strength; their position, their possible (and too probable) union, and their exclusive *imperial* titles, with other nominal pretensions, may best seem entitled to their possession.

7. Let me now introduce a remark or two respecting the *spontaneous union of two nations*, upon a *real system* of fraternity. — In politics, intentions are seldom, for any length of time, to be trusted; and, where a state, already comparatively great, may become greater than is compatible with the safety of its neighbours, those neighbours may oppose, or, at least, (by means which are within themselves,) may avoid contributing to an union attended with hazard to themselves. — No union, however, can be called voluntary, which is not attended with the true circumstances of free volition; namely, deliberation and self-possession, free from foreign force. Indeed, upon *French* principles,  
the

the very dominion, supposed to be incorporated, ought at all times to be able to revise its own act, and to be able to disunite itself at pleasure ; provided no joint object, of a permanent nature, shall have occurred in the interim to prevent it. — But circumstances may render even voluntary unions premature ; as, for example, an union between a conquered province and its conqueror, like that of Savoy with France, is improper, if made previous to a peace ; for, such are the fluctuations of war, that, till a peace determines the ultimate success of the war, conquests ought to be held merely as *pledges in deposit* ; and by no means to be subjected to the evils of a revolution, when they may immediately be forced back to their old situation. — But, if this incorporation of territory and people, by the French, has been censurable, it is by no means more censurable than the incorporation made or to be made by the triumvirate ; or than those agitated by the *chamber of re-unions*, under the French monarch Louis XIV. especially as the present French accompany *their* conduct with this check and this balsam, that they place their new friends in the same situation with themselves ; without retaining (any more than they now do in the case of Corsica) either superiority or even precedence. — The most important remark, however, to make upon this subject is, that a system of union of nation to nation, whether happening spontaneously or otherwise, is more or less dangerous,

gerous, according to the principles, the power, and the position, of the parties. A potentate, therefore, (like Russia,) which is belligerent by profession, which has immense strength, and is placed in the midst of a multitude of objects of prey; is the potentate of all others the least to be indulged with practising under such a system: But, should there be an *union* of such potentates among themselves, (like that of the triumvirs,) I will not say concluded, but merely possible; can there be a doubt, whether, at least, *encouragement* towards them ought not to be withheld in such a case. — When a martial power can once make conquest into *traffic*, by enabling one conquest to pay the expence of itself and of a succeeding one; and when it can produce another dangerous union, namely, that of adding new recruits, out of its new conquests, to swell its old armies; then, indeed, will it have combined together the most dangerous of all systems; and never will its temple of Janus be shut, while there is a world left to be subdued. — By these rules let France be judged, compared with the triumvirs, as to the subject of unions.

8. The last general remark which I shall make regards the power of *habit* upon the mind of man respecting wars. — If a petty litigation should occur between two neighbouring corporate towns, the madness and atrocity of one of them in proposing to *burn*, and still more to exterminate, the other, would

would be apparent ; and nothing but custom (introduced chiefly by princes and chieftains) can make this practice seem tolerable between nations, where it is so much more absurd ; because the fees to the advocate armies, which plead the cause at issue, are more enormous, the opportunity for mischief more extensive, and the gains (if any) less proportionate, in the case of nations than of towns. — But even allowing nations to go to war, still wars may be more humanized than at present, without injury to their principal intention ; for what, in general, are the present *laws of war* ; but only such reliques of the laws of justice and civilization, as the barbarous habits of men have permitted to subsist during war, for the mutual convenience of *the combatants* ? habits, which are so established, that it was ridiculous in the French, in the outset of hostilities, to suppose (as they seemed to do) that they could be suddenly changed. — As our feelings, however, have been greatly revolted by the *novelty* which common warlike proceedings have assumed, when managed by the French ; it is to be wished, that Europe, at least, should take advantage of this mode, as it were, of getting at truth by *surprize* ; so as to amend its own two similar proceedings. — But, till that fortunate moment shall arrive, it may be proper to attempt to bring ourselves, at least into a state of charity and candour towards the French. And, for this purpose, I shall cite a passage strongly descriptive of the proceedings

ceedings of *old established* governments towards their neighbours. It is extracted from an author, whom I have sometimes thought became a misanthrope, from the very circumstance of his having been capable of *respecting* his race, had it been more deserving of it; (for I must add, by the by, that perhaps the best possible temper for a public character is neither that which is too sanguine as to the virtues of men, nor that which is too irritable as to their vices; but rather that, which has learned to *compassionate* them, and to perceive, that if mankind cannot be made perfect, they may at least be improved; which therefore comprehends that heavenly sentiment, "Forgive them, for they *know not* what they do.")—The passage I allude to is as follows: "Sometimes the quarrel between *two* princes is to decide which of them shall dispossess a *third* of his dominions, where *neither* of them pretend to any *right*. Sometimes one prince quarrels with another, for fear the *other* should quarrel with *him*. Sometimes a war is entered upon, because the enemy is too *strong*; and sometimes because he is too weak. Sometimes our neighbours *want* the things which we have, or *have* the things which we want; and we both fight, till they take ours or give us theirs". It is a very justifiable cause of war to invade a country after the people have been wasted by *famine*, destroyed

• [These are commercial wars.]

" by



" by *pestilence*, or embroiled by *seditions* among  
 " themselves. It is justifiable to enter into a war  
 " against our nearest ally, when one of his towns  
 " lies *convenient* for us, or a territory \* \* that  
 " would render our dominions round and complete.  
 " If a prince sends forces into a nation, where the  
 " people are poor and ignorant, he may lawfully  
 " put half of them to *death*, and make slaves of  
 " the rest; in order to civilize and reduce them  
 " from their *barbarous* way of living. It is a very  
 " *kingly*, honourable, and frequent, practice, when  
 " one prince desires the assistance of another to se-  
 " cure him against an invasion, that the assistant  
 " (when he has driven out the invader) should  
 " *seize on the dominions himself*; and kill, imprison, or  
 " banish, the prince he came to relieve." " There  
 " is likewise another kind of princes, not able to  
 " make war by themselves, who hire out their  
 " troops to richer nations, for so much a day to  
 " each man; of which they keep three-fourths to  
 " themselves, and it is the best part of their main-  
 " tenance." — But perhaps it will be expected, that  
 I should give a graver authority upon this occa-  
 sion, than *Swift's Gulliver*; and therefore, without  
 referring to common-place, I shall cite a few de-  
 tached passages from Tacitus. " *Sua retinere,*  
 " *privatæ domus: de alienis certare, regiam laudem*  
 " *esse.*" — " *Facilior inter males consensus ad bel-*  
 " *lum, quam in pace ad concordiam.*" — " *Penes*  
 " *quos aurum et opes, precipuæ bellorum causæ.*"

— "*Libertas*

“ — *Libertas et speciosa nomina* pretextuntur: nec  
 “ *quisquam* alienum servitium et dominationem sibi  
 “ concupivit, ut non eadem ista vocabula usurpa-  
 “ ret.”\*

But these desultory remarks shall now be concluded by a short exhortation in favour of *peace*. — Let us, then, with a view to the *termination* of the war, recollect the alleged *causes* of it. These were, first, our allies, who appear safe and content-

\* The following passage is from Plutarch. “ Of all the  
 “ virtues of Aristides, the people were most struck with his jus-  
 “ tice; because the public utility was most promoted by it.  
 “ Thus he, though a poor man and a commoner, gained the  
 “ royal and divine title of the Just, which kings and tyrants  
 “ have never been fond of. It has been *their* ambition to be  
 “ *filed takers of cities, thunder-bolts, conquerors*; nay some have  
 “ chosen to be called *eagles* and *vultures*. Whereas, the Deity  
 “ himself, to whom they want to be compared, is distinguished  
 “ by three things, immortality, power, and virtue; and, of  
 “ these, virtue is the most excellent and divine. For, space  
 “ and the elements are *everlasting*; earthquakes, lightning,  
 “ storms, and torrents, have an amazing *power*; but, as for  
 “ *justice*, nothing participates of that, without reasoning and  
 “ thinking upon God; and, when men foolishly neglect virtue,  
 “ (the only divine quality in their reach,) they consider not,  
 “ that it is justice alone which makes heavenly and divine the  
 “ life of those in prosperity and high stations, while injustice  
 “ renders it groveling and brutal.”

Delicacy prevents our multiplying similar passages; though there is scarcely *one* author of any extent, in any language, in whom such are not to be found.

ed. Next, our domestic levellers, who appear to be themselves levelled and silenced ; not by external, but by *internal*, means. And, lastly, the security of Europe : and here, as the French have made their wild experiment in favour of an instantaneous transfusion of opinions from nation to nation, and find the success of it impossible, and the burden of the attempt ruinous ; they have given, when joined to the antipathy of Europe, the best possible pledge to be had for their future good behaviour. — But, says Mr. Dundas, (*in the name of the crown,*) we are seeking after an “ effectual barrier” against France. If this means the triple line of fortresses on the East of France, Marshal Saxe’s sagacious opinion in favour of fortresses, as *separated from towns*, may convince us, that it would be much wiser and cheaper to have fortresses of that description erected *de novo* ; than to seek the acquisition by war of those of a *different* description now belonging to the French. — But, lastly, the idea of indemnification intervenes ; on which subject we have only to observe, that, whenever a country, like Great Britain, obtains a prize out of the lottery of war, it pays ten-fold its value ; independent of the question, whether it is just to seek for this species of remuneration.

But, in the mean time, let us go back to the question of the *security of Europe* ; and ask our consciences, whether, in present circumstances, the security of Europe and of mankind, of public and of  
*private*

*private* rights, is not more endangered by the triumvirate of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, or even by the duumvirate of Russia and Austria, or even by Russia alone; than it is by France? If this be so, then let us seriously consider, what is to prevent a peace! — Is it dignity, *wounded* dignity, “which drags its slow length along?” Alas! *dignity*, in its true sense, means only the acting in correspondence to character; though, in its corrupt and inflammatory sense, it implies state and irritability, an unaccommodating manner regardless of consequences, and the pursuit of pride without attention to prudence. But there is another word, quite as high-sounding as dignity, and a little more useful in politics; I mean *magnanimity*. Magnanimity signifies a mastery of the passions; it makes men not merely the equals, but the superiors, of their enemies; it conciliates interest with dignity, and kindness with pride; it is sonder of spontaneous, than of extorted, concessions, as rendering all parties happy, as well as all parties safe; and it is the companion of a great temper and a great understanding, as much as pride is that of little ones. Let us, then, deal with *magnanimity* towards the French; and “be to their faults a little blind, and to their virtues very kind.” — But, above all, let us avoid the rash opinion, that we can give to the French *the government which we desire*; for, it is not enough to wish the present men *away*, unless we can say who are to *follow* them; and, in this respect, I

venture to say, that we seek something which is not for *us*, but for the *continental* powers alone to decide. — Every thing, then, leads us to conclude, that France, as far relates to our *existence*, is a puny enemy; but, that the others are tremendous; for, whatever *they* shall determine in the affairs of Europe, unless France shall aid us, it is out of *our* power to gainsay.

As to Russia, it is mortifying to think how she deludes us. A woman, we are told, has already beguiled our race; and a woman, without she is opposed, is again about to do the same. She throws down among us the apple of discord; thinking that, while we are running after it, she shall herself win the prize. — But let us recover our recollection. The empress has no character for *sentiment* about her, and has given much cause for being suspected both of deception and ambition, especially when she has before her an opportunity of employing both qualities, like the present. — As to her people, we are told, by a high authority, that we must slay a Russian before he can feel; and they certainly are capable of that *improbis labor* in war, which makes them truly formidable; having, as in the case of a desperate fencer, something which is more potent than skill. Let us, then, disdain her pretended overtures for assisting us; (*nam timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*;) for, she will only treat with us, gain time, and end in seeking to over-reach us. Rather, then, let us consider her as meaning to do  
her

her worst, and guard against it; and, when she sends ambassadors to talk to us about the concerns of France and of Europe, let us act the part of *Neptune*, of whom we pretend to be the favourites.

- ‘ Jam cœlum terramque, meo sine numine, venti,
- ‘ Miscere et tantas audetis tollere moles ?
- ‘ Quos ego — Sed motus præstat componere fluctus.
- ‘ Maturate fugam, regique hæc dicite vestro :
- ‘ Non illi imperium pelagi, sævumque tridentem ;
- ‘ Sed *mibi* forte datum. Tenet ille immania faxa,
- ‘ Vestras, Eure, domos : illâ se jactet in aulâ,
- ‘ Æolus, et clauso ventorum carcere regnet.’

Sic ait : dicto citius, tumida æquora placat,  
Collectasque fugat nubes, solemque reducit.

As to wars, *ad internecionem*, they are not necessary with France, for France cannot harm us; they are far more necessary, if they were practicable, with powers of a more noxious nature. — Respecting France, her fate is perhaps difficult to read. But, this we may know, that, assaulted as she is with a hurricane from within and from without, during which the wind is veering into every quarter, it is difficult, even should she fall, to say which way she shall fall; though which ever way *the tree falls*, there is much danger that *so shall it lie*. And, if we think it wise to run the hazard of accident; if we choose to restore the *central* link in the chain of the *family compact*, re-inforced as it now is by new members and by new motives; be it so: but, in that case, I shall be able to discover no *national* cause for continuing the war, and only such

*personal* ones, as I shall not wish, and the favourers of them will not choose, to name. — Let us, then, instantly quit this war for vague public objects, where danger equally attends good and bad success, while we have *peace at our command*; remembering, that so long as we find a power in France capable of conducting a war, we find a power capable of concluding a peace; and that the only thing meriting our attention upon this occasion is, in whom resides the *spring of action* as to the war in France; for, as to mutability and inconsistency, the charge on these heads is equally heavy against the confederates, as against France.

*A CALM OBSERVER.*

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L E T T E R   X I.

*Published June 7, 1793.*

S I R,

**M**Y present correspondence is now at its close, in consequence of my having discussed all and more than the objects for which I became pledged at its commencement, except what respects  
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the death of the King of France. — As this topic is of considerable historic magnitude, and the impression from it operates to prolong our impolitic war, I shall begin my present letter with a few reflections on the character and fate of this unhappy prince, and then proceed to other matter.

•And here I must observe, that if Louis XVI. while he lived, was wholly neglected by many, who think that hecatombs are necessary to expiate his death; it is because the *king* is infinitely more lamented by these persons than the *man*; some of them having even wished for his death, that it might increase the public enmity against *his* opponents, who are considered also as their *own*. Thus, of all his friends, those of liberty appear the truest; since, from having earnestly laboured to avert his fate, they may be supposed the most sincerely to regret it.

The attachment of well-informed and virtuous men to Louis XVI. commenced almost with his reign. After the example of his father, the Dauphin, he was early said to respect *general* liberty; and if his regard for *religious liberty* did not fully discover itself till the revolution and till his death, it was because it was checked by his clergy and by the bigotry of too many of his nation. His successive adoption of St. Germain, Turgot, and Necker, as ministers, on account of their public characters, may be considered as a solid pledge for the sincerity of his own; for it will not be con-



tended, that he learned any virtues in his court; a school in which virtues are seldom to be found, particularly those of economy and retrenchment. It was indeed his peculiar fate to possess merits which led him to yield to the *faults* of those who stood near his person, and that, while he was despised for the want of intriguing talents, he was ruined by those who had them; it being clear, that, if he had uniformly pursued his own plain sentiments and sense, he would have remained safe upon his throne, an object of adoration. His sacrifices to his people, as long as they were spontaneous, clearly shewed his desire of being united to them, by acts tending to their mutual happiness; (even at a period, when princes in France were held as the proprietors of their subjects, and when *merely not to injure them* was considered as meritorious.) When sacrifices afterwards came to be demanded from him, no one could more readily acquiesce in them; not because he had no will, but because he had an honest one. Indeed, concession seldom seemed to cost any thing to himself, personally, except on account of those about him; for, when these were satisfied, all his difficulties seemed to vanish.

Selfish sentiments had as little share in his foreign as in his domestic politics; for, though he employed several ministers of the old school, yet ambition never was found the feature of his reign. If he fought, by the American war and by other measures,

tures, to reduce the naval power of England, yet the peace of 1782-3 shewed that he aimed at retaining no conquests for himself. In short, while his was the first court, since the time of Henry IV. of France, from which a public wish for universal peace has been heard; so there was no public measure, which any other court could propose for the advancement of mankind, in which he was not forward to concur.

Though the mode of thinking of Louis XVI. was thus a powerful second to good ministers, and a powerful check to bad ones; yet, at some moments, he wanted the firmness necessary to resist seducing importunity, particularly from a certain quarter; and his conduct accordingly became mixed, in proportion as his own feelings or those of others bore the ascendant in it. — This very circumstance, however, in the end, furnished a peculiarly strong motive for *protecting his life*; because it prevented his becoming too popular with the nation on one side, as well as lessened the confidence of the aristocracy and of foreign powers in him on the other. He was the least dangerous, therefore, of all the claimants, for restoring the throne, especially while confined at Paris; at the same time that his life obstructed the pretensions of others of his family, whose characters were more decisive, and who were out of the power of the Convention. Besides, if the revolution, in case of his execution, was so certainly capable (as was pretended) of  
maintaining

maintaining itself against the resentment of the whole of Europe, and against the feelings of those of the French who would consider him as an innocent victim, and even as the object of sacrilege; the revolution was capable, in case he had been spared, of the still easier task of resisting a part of Europe without, and a less irritated temper of the enemies to the revolution within. — Yet this amiable prince, whose virtues paved the way to the revolution, and formed at first its fairest hope, fell, *without any immediate public motive whatever*, a martyr (as I am willing to allow, in a metaphoric sense) to the madness or to the austerity of some, and to the cowardice or the ineffable villany of others.

But feeling, as I do deeply, the truth of these sentiments, still I cannot be blind to several facts which go to mitigate them. First, against the fatal sentence in question, nearly one half of the Convention was opposed; and therefore that intire body is by no means blameable. Next, still less did the people partake in this measure of violence; for, the king's enemies were afraid of appealing to that people. Thirdly, if the trial failed in its obvious forms, yet it must be allowed, as in the case of English jurymen, that *personal* knowledge was deemed a supplementary circumstance, which enabled the Convention to pronounce in it. Lastly, although the king sincerely accepted the constitution, yet, since he appears to have afterwards more than negatively opposed it, it was unfair to hold the single provision

provision for his inviolability as valid, when the spirit of all the rest of it was invaded; for, this would be to have put him in a situation to profit by his own wrong.

Whether violence to royal personages is permissible, is useless for me to inquire, when my sole object is to prove, that the French have not exceeded others in the very acts for which it is most affected to revile them. — To say nothing of Russia and other countries, or even of our own, in more ancient periods; it was in England that Henry the Eighth repeatedly beheaded or repeatedly repudiated one queen, that he might marry another; it was in England that Elizabeth put to death Mary, the queen of the neighbouring country of Scotland, because she was jealous of her merits; it was here, likewise, that Charles the First expired upon a scaffold; and that James the Second, also, had his vacant throne *assumed and maintained against him by his own daughter and nephew*; all which transactions were included in the short space of two centuries. And, when a motion was made, a few years since, in the house of commons, to expunge the martyrdom of Charles from its calendar, (where it has since been canonized anew;) the reason, which weighed for retaining it, was, that it served as a proper memento both to prince and to people. Besides, nations, like individuals, often commit violent acts, of which their repentance is sincere; though, were it otherwise, the principles of natural law

law allow no interference, on the part of foreigners, to be offered against the inclinations of a people. — Whatever respect, therefore, kings may deserve for the sake of their people, yet, since in *other* views they are but mere individuals, it is not upon pretences of this sort that we are to convert Louis XVI. into a firebrand, and make him, “like another Helen, “serve to fire another Troy;” especially as he cannot be revived, as to his own person, and his death has clearly aided the cause of royalty.

But here let us drop the curtain over the grave of an unhappy prince, in whose fate mankind are so unfortunately involved. — And, as it serves for my concluding topic, let me now, for a moment, turn back to *review the general object of such of my letters*, as in a few days will be presented, in a small volume, to the public.

When the popular exertions of France lately alarmed the princes of Europe, they soon forgot their enmities, which were founded on mischievous public principles; to form a friendship, which was founded upon others still more deleterious; and, as fear gave to them the hint, so rapacity and success have since cemented it. Poland and France have experienced the first essays of their new system, and Turkey and Germany are about to be its next objects. — It is this new turn of the passions of modern princes, (by which they have exchanged their mutual jealousies for a general collusion,) which  
I have

I have endeavoured to ascertain and to expose ; shewing that they are no longer engaged in counter-struggles with one another, to end in constituting a *balance* of power, but are combined for a general *extension* of power ; and that, while all of them are armed against the public, the stronger of them will swallow up their weaker brethren ; since ambition, whenever it allies with ambition, has but one object, which is prey, and one enemy, which is liberty.

But, not content with portraying this system, I have specified its various consequences. — It is a saying, in fabulous philosophy, that *serpens non fit draco, nisi serpentem devoraverit* ; and ambition, which, whether it is lowly and creeping or high-crested and rampant, is always deadly, is a monster of the same kind ; enlarging its form, and growing more and more terrible in its nature, in proportion to the quantity of prey which it devours. — When the Roman power formerly deluged the world, it soon destroyed every thing which could soften or instruct it ; and, after an universal waste of *human* happiness, the masters of it found, to their cost, that they could no where secure any happiness for themselves. Ignorant of the truth, that the active and prurient passions of man soon run into excesses, by which they pall and become satiated, and that they require checks instead of stimulants to produce that modest and frugal use under which alone they furnish our *best* and most *secure* enjoyments ; they  
quickly

quickly extinguished every principle which could moderate and humanize their characters, and which could give the only satisfaction of which our limited nature is capable, and the only stability to be expected in human affairs. — The same fatal career, however, which was run by the emperors of Rome, is begun under the triumvirate of Austria, Russia, and Prussia; and, if it succeeds, will, by producing a gradual concentration of power in their hands, or of those of the strongest of them, introduce throughout the universe the same sad and rapid consequences, and in a manner equally unsuspected by the authors of them. — With this view, I have demonstrated, that the system will be as fatal to those who are at the head of it, and to their families, as to those who will be trampled under its feet.

But drawing the discussion nearer home, I have shown the several evils likely to arise to ourselves, whether we assist this union of sovereigns, under the name of a *Concert of Princes*, of a *triumvirate*, or of a *confederacy against France*; for such are the various shapes, in which this active Proteus has appeared in less than two years. Accustomed to view France as a rival, we forget that those are our worst rivals, who most endanger us; and that nothing can be a saller *national* policy for Great Britain, than to assist in subjugating France, in order thereby to unite it to the confederated powers, either directly as a conquest, or indirectly as an ally; (for there is no doubt, that the queen and her son, who

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are of Austrian descent, and the princes, who are Bourbons, will in the capacity either of regents or of sovereigns, and from necessity, ambition, or affection, respectively seek to join France to the potentates now combined against the security of Europe; while, on the other hand, there is as little doubt, that France, if kept in her present shape, will be as obstinately opposed to that confederacy.) A monarchy in France, of such a nature, as shall admit the *national* will to preponderate, and prevent the renovation of that *family* compact, of which France was once the corner-stone and master-key, and which is now capable of being so much extended; I say *such* a monarchy, might give satisfaction to ourselves as well as happiness to France. But I have shewn, that the establishment of such a monarchy is not in our power; since all concerns of the continent must depend upon the *continental* powers, who will seek either to erect France into a *personal* government; or else to dismember it, in order to swell their own power, or to incapacitate its future opposition to them; and thus leave to ourselves *singly* the care of the balance and independence of Europe. — The danger from such a position of things, I have shewn to our princes, if they are honest; to ourselves, if they are not honest; to our allies also; and to our foreign possessions, (especially the East-Indies, most seriously threatened by Russia, and the more so, because we do not suspect it.) — In the catalogue of our hazards,

I have



I have not forgotten that which is run by our ARISTOCRACY; who certainly mistake their own permanent personal interest, if they think that it can be served by any thing besides a system of *crown influence*, held constantly upon the *balance* in order to give a constant importance to their services; or if they suppose that despotism will not be far more inimical to their privileges, than a fair constitution. — Let me here add, that though the English nation has confessedly seldom been wise in its foreign politics, yet it has generally been honest; and so it happens upon the present occasion; for, deceived by its own integrity, it has had nothing in view but the safety of its allies and of Europe, and a generous sympathy with those who have suffered from the French; trusting always, that foreign princes had the same object, and would equally stop at the completion of it. Whether success will tarnish our generosity, time may discover; but, if *ambition* is at the bottom of the present war, every good man will have seen with delight, that it has, as yet, in no shape manifested itself in the temper of the *nation*. — I wish it may be found, that such ambition exists no where else; and, if so, we shall soon terminate a war which must be ruinous if adverse, and still more dangerous if successful; and thus leave the French bounded to their own territory, and occupied with their own dissensions. — There is an Italian proverb, which says, that “ the  
 “ Italians are wise before they begin a thing, the  
 “ Germans

“ Germans while they are about it, and the French “ when it is all over.” Let us then at least be a little wiser than the French before “ *time is past* ;” and not act like the fencer described by Demosthenes, who never thought of parrying a thrust, till the stroke had been given.\*

To have exposed all these circumstances in our present situation, I deem not only a service to my country, but to administration ; for those must be blind friends to them, who do not perceive, that it is much better that they should receive suggestions now, than reproaches hereafter ; and that, in giving my opinions, I have willingly spared every censure upon them.

As I have spoken freely of princes upon several occasions in my letters, I think this the proper place to do both them and myself justice, by shewing, in a few words, the inconvenience of a *democratic republic* in England ; not merely, as I have formerly intimated, because a mixed government has here been tried, approved, is established, and cannot be changed without convulsion ; nor, because it would be difficult to determine upon the new government to follow ; but for other important

\* This simile is the more to our purpose, as it was employed by Demosthenes to guard Athens and Greece against that *monopoly of power* in Macedon, which, in a few years, mastered Greece, and instantaneously afterwards converted it into an instrument under Alexander to subdue Asia.

reasons. When the poor, in consequence of being ill educated, are ignorant and dissolute, they are easily deluded or corrupted; and it is, therefore, difficult to establish a good government in such case, upon the basis of universal representation, though a good government is never more needful. It is not, however, because the lower poor *want property*, that they are to be provisionally suspended from their elective rights; but because the want of property indicates a *want of information and of independence*; and, therefore, education must always prepare the way for broadening the representation, where it is wished directly to include the lower poor. Bad delegates, on the part of the lower poor, would endanger *other* rights, far more important to them than that of *election*; they would also put into hazard the happiness of *other men*, besides their constituents; and would prevent that gradual improvement in all classes, which ought to be a chief object of government. Besides; demagogues seldom use the people otherwise, than as the *means* of power, considering *themselves* only as the end; and, consequently, while the memory of kings subsists, they may perpetually endeavour to revive that office in their own persons, and have recourse to despotism both to acquire and to support it. But, if there is to be a king, surely one that is *hereditary* is the best; since, at least, it precludes the struggle annexed to disputed titles. Let us add, that kings, from being born in elevated situations, are less likely than

than usurpers to confine their patronage to the narrow limits of this and the other family; because, as their privileges are acknowledged, they are prone to fewer jealousies; and, by balancing the pretensions of one man against those of another, they oftener arrive at an even distribution of their favours than might be expected. Unity, likewise, is more natural in a government, where a king presides, than in a republic composed of various interests; since a king derives so much from his government, that he has a real motive for keeping it together; for, after all, it will be found, that the true secret of government, in corrupt countries, lies in *placing power where public and private interest most combine, and where the whole is attended with the best checks*; until that happy period shall arrive, when the administration of public affairs shall offer less temptations for doing wrong, and men shall have better dispositions for doing right, than at present.—As to vigor, it certainly belongs to a republic, which both produces sensation, and admits of action, in the greater number; and secrecy is of little importance where there is sufficient strength for self-defence, and where motives are honest. But, although these last, with other advantages, belong to republics, I must remain for my own part, and for the reasons here given, attached to a mixed monarchy, among a people like the English; desiring only such reforms in it, as are likely to possess the general approbation.

Let the attachment to a mixed form of government however proceed to what extent it may, our measures in its favour ought to be confined to ourselves, and we ought not to propagate *politics* by the sword, any more than religion. — Detestable as are the Jacobin doctrines, of partial being more authoritative than national insurrections, of controlling the representatives of France by *self-elected* clubs and spectators, of silencing all opponents by mobs and by murder, of inviting massacres under the cloak of the liberty of the press, and of suffering popular crimes to go unpunished, because the people are to be held sovereign; I say, detestable as is the creation of a new order of men, thus *privileged* to do wrong, in nothing is it more detestable, than as it enables the enemies of France, by spending a few thousand pounds a year, to disturb and to disgrace its government, and to poison it at its source. Too weak to resist the French in front, and, knowing impetuosity to be the vice of their character, they hire patriotism under every mask, in order to get behind them, and stimulate them into new follies and horrors; of which they throw the reproach upon the French, and take the profit to themselves. — My dislike of factions, in the meantime, shall not make me forget, that the chief of the early part of the French revolution was glorious; that the middle part of it only exhibits a revolution *opposed*; and the latter part of it a revolution *driven to extremities*. The first foundation of  
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the evils in question lay in the French Constituent Assembly; who, forgetful of their national proverb, that *le mieux est l'ennemi du bien*, desired a perfect government for imperfect men; and thence proved the truth of another maxim, namely, that *optimi corruptio fit pessima*. Next, from their weak affected love of lenity, they *punished no one*; which soon led the mob to take punishments into their own hands, which also passed unnoticed by them; and this being afterwards followed by the absurd theoretical doctrine, that nothing is criminal which is *printed*, produced this monstrous result; namely, that the mob of Paris, without the medium of any representation, controls France, at the invitation of libellous demagogues, who, in the mean time, are too careful of their own power to suffer the mob to be educated. The intrigues of the *enemies* of France have since rendered all remedy difficult. — But even, in this horrid extremity, the wretched Marat, in my opinion, is quite as respectable as a despot; for both parties are blood-thirsty, and both consult only their ambition and interest; only that one uses a mob, and the other an army; one deceives and the other defies the people; and one plays the part of the upstart and proceeds *pro re nata* and according to the exigence and passions of the moment, and the other acts *secundem artem* and according to precedent. Though the mob, therefore, which was lately a beast of burthen in France, is now stung with the gad-fly of licentiousness, and, like the ox,

which is said to have forded the Palus Mæotis, may trespass the boundaries of political geography, and perhaps, in so doing, teach us unsuspected truths; yet it is the clear result of experience, that the best mode of restoring *quiet* in France is to restore them to *circumstances of quiet*.\*—Thus, in America, after they had been driven by our persecutions into an interregnum full of distresses and excesses, it required several years, and two *successive sets of constitutions*, before they attained their present state of wholesome liberty, where though their *federal* government, from circumstances easily explained, forms a weak fabric, unless cemented by danger; yet their separate states in general exhibit prosperous and respectable governments, chiefly from the absence of war and foreign interference.

But, as I must here take a leave of the public, which I shall endeavour to make final, (though by no means binding myself to this effect,) I must pass from kings to a more unworthy subject, in order to reply to the question of *Who is the Calm Observer?*—And, to this I answer, in the words of Æsop, *What I have covered with a cloak, I design should be bid*. I think the inquiry, therefore, is at

\* I say, that this results from experience; for every step, which has yet been taken to stifle the popular party in France, has ended in pushing the popular party into new extremes, and in the overthrow of its opponents.

least thoughtless, if not ungenerous ; since I am no candidate for public favours, and desire nothing to be credited upon my own authority. — But, for the sake of others, who may at any time be thought to be implicated with me, I shall say who the *Calm Observer* is *not*. He is not, then, a *party-writer* ; the whole of my political writings having been confined to the late American and present French war ; which are not to be called party-objects, for they have regarded not only our country but mankind. It is not that I could not write upon party, with more effect, perhaps, than upon other subjects ; but, as I have never inclined to these things, I presume I shall not now be provoked to enter upon them. — But where, then, have I obtained my information ? I answer, from public documents and what occurs to travellers ; having studiously avoided every party and domestic communication, which might either fetter or discover me. Of this fact, my letters bear internal confirmation ; having originated from an incident which occurred when political men were dispersed in the country ; coinciding also with the views of no party whatever ; and having been too incorrectly, and in general too rapidly written, to have been the production of any concert. — To say the truth, warned by the judgment of various great men, I have always deemed it dangerous in public affairs to rely upon *anecdotes and secret history*. For example ; if the courts of Petersburg and Vienna should be



said to have become cool to each other, in consequence of the affairs of Poland, I would argue thus: — the fact may be false; it may be affected; it may be temporary; it may relate to trifles; or the present negotiations, like those of 1772–3, may be fluctuating; but, in any event, *great facts ought to receive more credit than little ones, and momentous events ought never to be left open to hazard*; and, as long as Austria suffers Poland to be apportioned or sequestered, either by Russia or by Prussia, and marches fresh troops to support its armies in France and Italy, there is nothing to be depended upon in the reports of a coolness between itself and Russia, — It is thus that I find a preservation against spurious or unmeaning anecdotes; and, to supply the want of those of another description, I rely upon a retrospect of past conduct, upon public events, and upon original documents. — Whoever will pursue simple rules like these, and read history with a view to its revolutions and its memorable characters, and be persuaded that the prince is made for the peasant, instead of the peasant for the prince, and learn at least to pity instead of hating mankind, (for “pity melts the soul to love,”) will find it easy to be, what, perhaps, I have only attempted to be,

*A CALM OBSERVER.*

*June 1, 1793.*

*P O S T S C R I P T.*

## POSTSCRIPT.

**I**T is with reluctance that I have felt myself called upon to protract my communications, in consequence of the unexpected and increasing dangers of public affairs. But trusting that apology will be superfluous, if I can interest the public attention, I shall proceed to state the recent declarations made by authority, on the subject of co-operating with the concerted sovereigns of Europe; and resisting all accommodation with France, with a view to follow them with remarks. — If error is obstinate, truth also is fertile, and I hope it will finally prevail, by its own operation, not only over *error*, but over an opposition still more *wilful*, if any such shall exist.

The speech of his Majesty, then, I must observe, announces no present design of listening to negotiation, but solely the pursuit of peace through the medium of *war*; it offers no hope even of an early issue to the contest; and it gives the melancholy double notice, that we are to persevere in vigorous exertions by *land*, and that we are actually embarked in a concert with *foreign* powers. — Ministry have declared farther, in their parliamentary characters, that any present negotiation would be impolitic and unseemly, if not ungrateful,  
towards

towards the confederates; fraudulent and discouraging towards the nation; nugatory in itself, from the want of proper organs to conduct it on the side of France; and improvident, by betraying our terms at present, when success may enable us to improve them hereafter. They have stated, that war has not yet performed its office upon the French, by producing either terror, security, or indemnity; that the evils, which it is inflicting upon ourselves, are not of an amount to require its termination; that it is new in politics to cease a defensive war, merely because an enemy ceases his aggression; that if the war is not pursued effectually at present, it may soon again return upon us; and that nothing therefore can make peace advisable under such circumstances, but necessity, or the overthrow of obnoxious persons or principles in France, or a diminution of the French power and an increase of our own. As to the mode of pursuing the war, it is to be either external or internal; Mr. Burke adding, with the concurrence (as I am informed) of Mr. Pitt, that it is lawful to employ insurrections, dissensions, and distresses in every shape; and both of them asserting, that it is allowable, if the war gives opportunity, to change the government of France. — I have aimed to make this statement correct, because, having to combat the war and not the ministry, it would only be to increase our trouble, were we to conjure up phantoms merely to lay them again.

The

The first and most natural observation here is, that the professed objects of the war are actually obtained; by the safety of those allies, of whom the *immediate* attack was solely occasioned by ourselves; by the repulse of the French from all those territories, where alone we originally pretended to dread their establishment; by the unanimous repeal of the French decree, respecting the interference in the interior of foreign countries; and by the demonstrated nullity of our domestic dangers from French intrigues. — If we wish for farther concessions or security from France, what is more natural, (in the phrase of Mr. Burke, or what more consistent, with “our relation to man and “to God,”) than to *demand* such, in the way of negotiation; which has a *second* time knocked loudly and uninvited at our doors; and which may be pursued without any relaxation in the immediate operations of the war. Avarice itself can offer no objection to this procedure; since it is easy to signify, that the terms to be required now, if refused by the French, will hereafter be enhanced, in proportion to our subsequent expences and advantages. — Does it happen, then, that a still worse motive than even *avarice* precludes negotiation; and that we are afraid to disclose the real objects of the war, too *early and distinctly* to the British nation, lest they should prove too revolting to it.

But the French, it is triumphantly said, are not to be trusted! — And who is to be trusted in politics?

politics? Shall we ask Poland, Bavaria, Holland, or Turkey, whether we are to put confidence in *princes*? What are military and naval establishments; what is the usual fate of treaties, which become multiplied from their very fragility; what the applause given to conquerors, the cold pity lent to those who are conquered, and the reputed impossibility of establishing a congress to decide national differences by pacific arguments; what are all these, I say, but so many proofs, that faith and justice do not inhabit courts? — If we allow, therefore, that the French, like others, are not to be trusted: still it will not follow, that they are not, like others, to be *negotiated with*. — Treaties of peace have other sanctions besides integrity. They rest, for example, upon the calculations of an adversary, respecting the probability of success in a war, the comparative cost of it, and the concurring zeal or obedience of the nation which is to support it. — And here let us ask, whether the *new* government of France, after having seated itself among the potentates of the earth by an universal ratification of its revolution, will be likely to renew the war upon the late frantic plan, which has excited all Europe against it, and rendered it impossible for it to find an ally? Let us remember again and again, that one of the chief offences given by the monarchy to France, was its belligerent passion; that France, in the early moments of its revolution, was profoundly indifferent to foreign affairs, though insulted by many,

and

and menaced by all foreign powers; and that it did not invent its system of fraternity for the poor silly reason, that a *tavern-meeting had proposed it*; but to enable it to turn its then *new* conquests in the Netherlands to some account, and to oppose the system of fraternity among sovereigns. — But experience keeps a dear school, in which even fools learn wisdom, and in this school the French illusion has been cured. The French have invited, and none have listened; they have “ piped, and none “ have danced;” the enthusiasm even of the *commonalty* in foreign countries is so far from being with them, that it is against them: and the soldiers and seamen of their enemies, whom they expected to see deserting by bands in order to come and receive bribes and liberty among them, hug their prejudices and even their chains, and fight against them with an inveteracy which seeks their very extermination. The same enthusiasts, therefore, who have risen unanimously to vindicate their *rights*, and to *expel* foreigners, will not march again into foreign countries, to write lessons with their blood, for unwilling pupils; nor will they waste their treasure, or expose their territory and commerce to ravage, for the purpose of instructing those, in whom they have no interest; and who may so much more easily be instructed by example, by printing-presses, and by time. And, as the new government of France is more popular than that of other countries,

tries, there is no nation which is more certain of seeing its wishes for a system of peace fulfilled, than that of France. — Besides, if candor will here, for a moment, recollect itself, it must be seen, that, in all new pursuits, the mind of man is apt to overact its part. In medicine, it is long before its best practice is found to consist in following nature or in doing nothing; simplicity and the absence of effort are also among the latest acquisitions of taste; toleration (as it is improperly called) and charity are still lessons to be learned by the pretended disciples of one who commanded us to love our neighbours; theorists of all kinds, in proportion as they are persuaded of the importance of their projects, are apt to seek for the iron hand of power to support them; and if the spread of *liberty* has, in like manner, been attempted by forcible or irregular means, those at least have no right to complain, who, by a like violence, have sought to propagate slavery. The prospect was magnificent and seemed feasible to the enthusiast, of being able to liberate the whole world from bondage; and, when sovereigns had *first* concerted a league against them, the attack upon sovereigns seemed a meritorious retaliation. — But the folly has first passed away on that side, where it was at least the most disinterested and best intended; and if the crusade *against* France has not been abandoned as sincerely as the crusade which it afterwards provoked to issue *out of* France, it is solely because *we* interfere to keep up the  
the

the war. Each side, in short, with our permission, may now easily be brought to a better understanding, than if the war had not occurred; especially as France has sufficient self-conceit to think, that should her bordering neighbours remain only as they did, (without being converted, as was projected, into barriers of freemen between herself and arbitrary princes;) she is at least as safe; as was Louis XIV. when he had rendered all Europe adverse to him.

If the French are said *formally to disclaim the policy and obligation of treaties*, we shall, by varying the words, and by specifying the different descriptions of treaties, soon detect what, by a gentle name, I shall only here call a misapprehension in their accusers. — Treaties, it must be remarked, are various; for they consist of offensive alliances, defensive alliances, treaties for mercenary forces, treaties for commercial and other civil objects, and treaties for peace. The French abhor *offensive* alliances; which are indeed every where exploded, except in those very cabinets, which are now combined against France. They conceive also those alliances which are *defensive*, to be superfluous to powerful states; unequal also in the burthen they impose on the side of the honest, because by the honest only they are strictly observed; premature also, inasmuch as cases of *strict* defence will commonly produce assistance at the moment; and, lastly, too implicit and peremptory in their nature to be satisfactory,



satisfactory, as they leave little room for the discussion of the cause of the quarrel. It will not be pretended, that France has any need of foreign *mercenaries*; and an aversion therefore to this description of force is peculiarly natural to a country, which has designed upon the return of peace to disband nearly the whole of its standing armies. As to *commercial* treaties, as the French theorists are in general advocates for a free trade, we must not wonder at their dislike to enter into bonds, either for its control or for its præternatural encouragement. But, as to treaties of *peace*, the French have never, in any period or in any manner, denied the wisdom of such, and much less the obligation created by them; for, this would, in effect, have been to declare for the perpetuity of war. — In four cases, in which treaties have lately been discussed in France, in nothing have they varied from these principles. France acknowledged the operation of a defensive league with Spain, and armed to assist her in the quarrel respecting Nootka Sound; for which, the immediate return of Spain is a *fait accompli* attack upon France. When the machinations of Austria had excited Europe against her, she declared, as she had a right to do, that the treaty of 1756, which was always onerous, was by this injury *ipso facto* voided. When General Montekiquou had covenanted with Geneva for the preservation of old treaties which respected the internal government of Geneva, and for punctilio which threw a doubt

doubt upon the *good faith* of France; she substituted a new treaty, whose principles, for my own part, I know not how to controvert. And, as to their commercial treaty with England; our alien-act and proceedings respecting corn may shew, that nothing but violence led them to dissolve, what yet they had long complained of as being unequal. — With regard to the dismissal of the Swiss troops, none will affirm, that the officers of these corps were inclined to serve the new government with the necessary fidelity and zeal; and the seduction of the men was only deemed a consequence of the French theory, that every adult person may choose his country; and, though indemnity was due to the officers, who honourably (as may be thought) for themselves retired, yet, since the French professed to grant it, whatever is granted them short of their due is matter of detail more than of *principle*, and subject at all times to negotiation and reparation. — With regard to the affair of the Scheldt, it was a measure (and perhaps a treacherous measure) originating in their executive council, and which admits of much discussion on both sides; but in which, on the whole, I think the French clearly wrong, even upon their own principles. — If the French have withheld, however, to change their allies, is not this common also to those governments which are swayed by the fluctuating passions or interests of *individuals*, whether they are kings or ministers, or the wives, mistresses, flatterers, or domestics, of such; and

are they not liable to the still farther changes consequent upon death? And is not this tendency to change peculiarly common in all cases of revolution? It must always however be remembered, in favour of the French, that, when they were forced to discuss the question of treaties, they always considered subsisting treaties as having a provisional operation.

If the *fluctuations of parties* in France are conceived to be an obstacle to peace, let us remember, that, among other fluctuations, better men may hereafter arrive at power in France; and that nothing can be more friendly to the progress of such a party, than peace. — Bad, however, as the present men may be thought, peace is *their* wish also. Desperation may change that wish, and produce two circumstances each of a nature to aggravate the other; first, that of the rendering the French as military as the early followers of Mohammed; and next, that of establishing among them more or less of an agrarian law. Should only half of the French nation, by retiring to the strong holds of France, be able to adopt the system in question; that half might soon communicate it, by force, necessity, or contagion, to the other half. And, against this evil, the holding in pay a knot of miscreants stationed at *Paris* will be no security whatever. — When *immense masses of men* are thrown into action by powerful motives, it is then that we are in the situation to see the greatest  
phenomena

phænomena of which human nature is capable; not such as are familiar to the short-lived, contracted, experience of men in office, but such as are recorded in the immense book of *ages*. — I pretend not in this to prophesy, but to caution; conceiving that the magnitude of the evil, should it in any degree arrive, will go far to atone for the supposed defect of probability in it. — Instead, therefore, of talking of the fluctuation of parties, let us advert to the fluctuation of *events*; and recollect, that, if all France should be conquered except a single fastness, from that fastness a new deluge might issue to overspread Europe. The proud phlegm and inflexible severity of a German conqueror cannot fail to revolt the gay conceit and easy sociability of a Frenchman; and no effort of France will be so terrible as *that* which it will make, when loaded with chains, to throw off such a conqueror. — Why, then, are we to pursue the war at such risk, and to push the spring back to its last measure of reaction? Why, by short-sighted, (and if I may be allowed a strong expression,) by *half-witted*, politics, are we to endanger the rise of a war, upon a *new* principle, which may last for centuries to come; which will first be abandoned (upon account of its expence) by the Germans who began it, will prove a never-dying torment to its closer neighbours, will engender new revolutions by the distress it will everywhere occasion, and by rendering France the resort of every hardy or enthusiastic adventurer, may form a new Algiers

in the heart of Europe? Why do we not try the experiment of letting the evil die away by quiet; which will as naturally happen, as waves slacken when the winds cease? — If we ridicule these fears, because of the French divisions, then surely we may venture upon peace with a nation *sinking from its divisions!*

If the question should recur, therefore, with whom are we to treat? let the old answer also recur: Treat and make peace, at all times, with those who can make war; with those who can give orders to 400,000 men to fight or to disband; and who, when they speak for themselves, speak for the men in France who are most turbulent and restless. — Peace, which is like rain to the parched earth, or like repose after agony; is too great a blessing to be rejected by a harrassed and blockaded nation, because concluded only by a nominal government or by base authors. The war will not hereafter easily be renewed for mere ambition, though now continued for defence; for, to renew it would be dangerous as well as futile, unless the French nation should concur, contrary to its interest and to probability. Besides, the men, with whom we may have to treat in France, are not military but civil; their object being internal and not external; and, if plunder is their design, they will naturally seek to have it free from danger. Mere peace, in short, considered as the cessation of war, is a bargain so good, that every party, succeeding to those who make it, must for  
its

its own sake respect it, since *lucri bonus odor ex quo-  
libet*: — But, if we add *hard conditions* to the  
peace, the peace then necessarily becomes precarious  
through the fault of those who impose such; and it  
would become precarious were a monarch the con-  
tracting party, instead of a republic. The confe-  
derates, indeed, will make no sacrifice of their am-  
bition to human happiness, by the offer of a fair  
and equal peace, till difficulties shall no longer leave  
it as a voluntary measure. Something better, in-  
deed, ought to be looked for from ourselves; but,  
in spite of all my anxieties, I am unable, by any  
good arguments that at present occur to me, wholly  
to acquit those who govern us of the imputation of  
ambition. — And, if the imputation of ambition  
made by some be just, the concealment of our  
terms of peace will then no longer prove an enig-  
ma; for, the disclosure of harsh terms might discour-  
age ourselves and exasperate France, if made pre-  
vious to our having that stock of conquests in hand,  
which is necessary to ensure our support of harsh  
terms on one side, and their acceptance on the o-  
ther. — It would be easy to place our subject in va-  
rying lights; but, reverting again to the simple  
question, with whom we are to treat, I answer, in  
the words of Scripture, *with the powers that be*. —  
Allowing that there should be some danger of the  
peace not being well observed, yet this danger is  
not so great, that it is not worth an experiment;  
besides, that the experiment is less to England,

Holland, and Prussia, (whose boundaries are defined towards France, by the interposition of sea, or of Austrian or other foreign territory,) than to others; and, should the experiment fail and the war return, we are as sure of having allies, as France is of being divested of them. If, instead also of spending secret service-money in producing discords in France, we employed it in paying half-a-dozen of their authors and chiefs to exert themselves in reviving those *pacific* theories, which had lately (to our certain knowledge) begun to pervade the whole of France, we should take away the sole stimulant to war, and “place our padlock upon their *minds*,” — But, were all these suggestions to prove mistaken, we have still to state, that the danger of an infirm peace and a renewed war is not comparable to the danger springing from the Concert of Princes, and the continuance of the triumvirate or duumvirate in the East of Europe, should France become crippled or divided; for, however cunningly we may think ourselves possessed of the secret of the several cabinets of Europe at the present moment, we forget that men may pass, and *opportunities* remain; and that our danger is not greatest from persons, but from *things*.

But let us next seriously consider what is to happen if we do *not* treat with *the men of the day*. — If we fight to bring other men into power in France who will better suit our fancy, this will be to render the war, a war of interference in the interior of France;

France; and we shall find it much harder to bring France into any given state of order, than to throw it into disorder; in short, to do than to undo. If we waste blood and treasure in attempting this change, till we can fight no longer; this, in effect, may be to make the distress of the English nation the only point of termination to the war; and if we shall then, after all, find that we have still none but men of the same description to treat with, it will be to aggravate that distress by disgrace and mortification. Again, if the war against France should prove without success in Europe, (for the foreign possessions of France, which are of little comparative moment to either party in the eyes of a wise man, will depend upon events in Europe,) the French, in such case, may refuse those very terms to which they would now accede; and all the intermediate loss of blood and property will then have been more than thrown away; especially as the confederates, in the mean time, may have made their own conditions, or at least have become languid in their exertions, from prudence or from necessity. And if, in the mean time also, such parts of Ireland, Scotland, and even England, as are now more than luke-warm in the war, should become ardent against it; and if other parts of these realms, which now support it from *confidence* in the Ministry, or from ignorance, (for the country is always slower of conviction than towns, and yet, as in the case of the American war, their minds borrow eyes from



their feelings;) if these, I say, should retract their confidence, then the Ministry will possess a situation somewhat less triumphant than the present. — Such are the answers to the question, with whom are we to treat? that is, to treat for ending a war, which it was originally unwise to begin; and of which the present objects are at least hazardous and undefined, if they are not also unjust. — If counter-treaties with the confederates tie our hands, they certainly have been made contrary to all remonstrance, and may chance not to be kindly considered by the nation, to *whose* interests they are not necessary; and by whom they can only, in that case, be viewed as officious and subtle pledges to bind it to a war, in which it is not naturally to be deemed as a principal.

Among the pretended original *objects* of the present war, the fear of domestic factions once held a foremost rank; but it now appears so little of a cause for *war*, that it seems only a source of ridicule. The absolute impossibility for administration to prove one instance of conspiracy or insurrection, where it had been so lavish in its charges of each of them, and the momentous measures which were cotemporary with and aided by those charges; lead us to suspect a secret connection between the two incidents; and that there was a plot on the side of *administration*, instead of the people.

We

We shall perhaps see the secret solved by our immortal Shakespear.

Upon the corner of the moon —  
 There hangs a vaporous drop profound;  
 I'll catch it ere it come to ground;  
 And that, distilled by magic flights,  
 Shall raise such artificial sprights,  
 As by the strength of their illusion,  
 Shall draw him on to his confusion:  
 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear  
 His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear:  
 And you all know, *security*  
 Is mortal's chiefest enemy.

But without waiting for the explanation from "the little spirit sitting in the *foggy* cloud," next alluded to by the poet, let us rejoice that this *pretence* for maintaining the war is now finally done away by the King's own authority; for, the speech says, that there has been "a *general and zealous* concurrence of his subjects in the *sentiment* for supporting the established constitution." So that, after making due allowance for the numbers of the luke-warm and the neutral, it is clear that the disaffected residue in this kingdom can no longer call for an instrument so important and so inapplicable, as that of a foreign war, for keeping them under subjection.

The vaunted debts of *gratitude*, contracted towards our allies, seem recited more as a cover than as a real motive for continuing the war; and this ostentatious mention, of what common policy would

would lead us to affect to undervalue, shews, perhaps, that the war has deeper objects than common, especially as the pretence is contrary to fact. — Has not, indeed, the appearance of Holland and ourselves in the field caused a most important *diversion* in favour of the allies? Did not the specific attacks of Holland and Maastricht drain Belgia of its new tenants, and open it to the return of the confederate forces? Are we not, therefore, placing the favour on the wrong side? And do not we gratuitously make ourselves out as *principals* in the war, to our own detriment? Why are we to fight for all, and wait the convenience of all, and again become the packhorse and paymaster of Europe? The *honour* of England is, in this case, no otherwise committed, than as we may choose to commit it to folly. — In the Russian war, we officiously fought to defend Prussia, without being bound to do it; and the same we did again lately for Holland; and, anxious for new clients, we now climb the Alps to pay the King of Sardinia for defending his own cause, though we ourselves had so lately slighted it. Our zeal for the Concert of Princes, overlooking all recent animosities, leads us even to distant Russia; our treaty with whom, in the midst of its burlesque, implies a serious tyranny over Denmark and Sweden. With the same view, we make treaties in Germany for hiring troops; though, if there is a species of treaty contrary to first principles on both sides, it is that of buying and selling  
human

human flesh, without the consent of the objects of it, and without regard to the merits of the cause in which they are to shed their blood; and the expence of it is still more to be complained of, if we are to guarantee the pasture-grounds in which these unfortunate human cattle are fed.

From the first moment of the French revolution, Lord Auckland tells us, that it was to be looked upon with an evil eye; and had not the confederates, therefore, been thought certain of success without our aid, our war might, perhaps, have borne its date from the last year. But the battle of Jemappe having restored to us this lost opportunity, Holland, without its own wishes, became the *prête-nom*, to give colour to the quarrel; Europe was ransacked for allies from one end to the other; negotiations for peace were disdained; hazardous measures were taken against neutral traders to France; and our home distresses were disregarded, particularly as they gave us many *recruits*, and lowered the pride of the manufacturing interest, held to be too prone to democracy. It was not, however, so much a slaughtered King, as an upstart republic, erected upon the neighbouring shores, which appears to have given this last stimulant to our politics. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ*: "This way madness lies," pomp being unwilling to take its physic.

But, had the war been an *ordinary* war, the evils of it would only have been ordinary. But it is of  
a far

a far other description. In a common war, as soon as the parties approach to lassitude, they think of peace, and rest harmless till the next war, without disturbing the balance of power. But the present war is ushered in with a Concert of Sovereigns, of which the first object is every where to crush the people, and the first consequence to annihilate the balance of power between nations. — Hence will follow the attempt to subjugate all the smaller or freer powers, (sometimes by bargains made in the midst of peace,) in order to swell the larger and more arbitrary power. Poland was thus instantly nipped in the bud, for pretending to be free; and France was destined to the same fate, for the same reason; but happily it has proved itself a plant of sturdy growth. England, though boasting of its freedom, nevertheless encourages this universal confederacy, in spite of the maxim of *divide et impera*; thinking, to all appearance, that there is no danger so great as too much liberty. And Hanover, lastly, which, seven years ago, thought it indispensable to form a league against *one* preponderating member in the Germanic body, now cements the union between *two* of them, doubtless possessed of some self-protecting or other secret, incommunicable to England. — But why *England* is so eager to replant the Bourbon stock, with an Austrian graft in it, upon the throne of France, and to re-combine the links of this dangerous chain of connection, remains for wiser men than myself to divine. Why  
also

also we are to divide France, and throw its remnants into the hands of those, who will next wish to divide ourselves, when France is the only great territorial power with independent principles, which is able to oppose them, is another equally deep enigma. Do we think, that the other mighty spoilers, with whom we are associated, will hear us talk of *indemnity and security*, without asking the like for *themselves*? and that if one pulls out a hair because it is white, another will not be separated because it is black; and thus France soon be left bald and bare to the winds of heaven; and reduced to a shattered mangled carcase, like another Poland, another Germany, or another Italy, the prey of the first comer, who shall be permitted by the confederacy to fasten upon it?

But what seems as shocking as any other topic in this war, is the mode proposed for carrying it on, *per fas et nefas*; by dissensions, insurrections, and distress; and in which, if *we* are ourselves backward, foreigners may so soon make up for the negligence. When I read of the late Congress at Antwerp, which cancelled the Prince of Saxe Cobourg's declaration both against the partition of France, and in favour of a constitutional king; and recollect that it was done under our auspices, who received with such placidness the Duke of Brunswick's manifesto, and who now talk of dividing France, both in a political and in a territorial sense; I cannot help thinking that we feel ourselves

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*in arrears* for the tardiness of our accession to the confederacy; which brings to my mind those other lines, from the witch-scenes, in Macbeth:

Saucy and bold, how did you dare  
To trade and traffic with Macbeth;  
In riddles and affairs of death;  
And I, the mistress of your charms,  
The close contriver of all harms,  
Was never called to bear my part  
Or shew the glory of our art?  
And, which is worse, all you have done  
Hath been but for a wayward son,  
Spiteful and wrathful; who, as others do,  
Loves for his own ends, not for you.  
But make amends now: get you gone,  
Round about the caldron go;  
In the poison'd entrails throw.  
Double, double, toil and trouble;  
Fire, burn; and, caldron; bubble;  
Like a hell-broth, boil and bubble;  
Cool it with a baboon's blood,  
Then the charm is firm and good.  
Oh well done! I commend your pains,  
And every one shall share i' the gains.

Black spirits and white,

Blue spirits and grey,

Mingle, mingle, mingle,

You — that mingle may.

There are many horrors, which lurk under the cover of general words, unseen even by those who pronounce them; as I shall here unfold with respect to those of *diffension*, *insurrection*, and *distress*.—In order to excite *diffension* in a direct manner in France, a faction-monger is applied to;

who,

who, like a poetaster or play-wright, looks about for the agents and materials for a storm. Alarmers and alarmists, irritators and moderators, affirmers and refuters, motion-makers and motion-spoilers, mob-leaders and mobs, are severally brought into play, and thus the plot gradually gathers and explodes; which is all attributed to the good people of Paris, while the thread, which dances the dreadful puppets, reaches to Vienna or Coblenz, or perhaps to London. — *Insurrections* are still more dreadful than dissensions, because every thing is staked upon them; and innocent men, lovers of their king and religion, are led from their families and peaceful occupations, to take up arms, probably in vain, and then to die in the field or on the scaffold. — As to *distress*, as long as it respects only the loss of superfluities or fopperies, it is little; but these articles alone are suffered to pass by sea; while

\* It is insinuated, that there are doubts whether this ought to be permitted, even in neutral vessels. If so, we shall leave far behind us the old controversy, whether free bottoms make free goods; for, we shall make the trade vitiate both ships and goods, contrary to all precedent. It will also be contrary to all policy; for, the tyranny of our navy will be remembered by neutral nations to our cost. If we studied humanity, we should lessen, instead of extending, the evils of war; and, if we regarded justice, we should remember, that, if the French are enough united in favour of the revolution to render this punishment applicable to them as a *nation*, they are enough united to lay claim to the quiet possession of their revolution and



white corn (the staff of life) and other provisions, of which the want affects the innocent poor, the female, and infant, stand under a dreadful interdict as to their entry into the ports of France. And mark the consequence: hunger, which admits of no apologies, attacks the rich of one party or the other, according to the local politics of the district; sheds blood, wastes property, frightens away supplies, and, ending in a worse provision than before, disease follows the footsteps of famine and tumult.—Thus worthy are the means of the end: and thus is a war, which even in its *best* view is a war of *metaphysics*, made to destroy the substantial happiness of man.

Observe too here, that the standard for guaging the propriety of continuing the war is masked under an impenetrable cover; and that the pretents against the peace are all of the most latitudinarian and self-generating description.—For example, is it time to say, that the French have a stable government? No, reply the faction-mongers and the combined generals; who convulse the country to its center.—Do you ask, are they yet to be trusted? No, it is replied, for there are still atheists and disorganizers, who publicly talk, and

and its fruits.—Will not such piratical conduct resemble that of certain uncivilized states, and will it not be a crusade upon the waters, against the individuals of a nation, instead of being solely against its armed forces?

write,

write, and govern, (being paid for so doing in various cases by foreign money). — Have we security enough? No, surely, replies every one; not while these things remain. — And then comes indemnity in the rear, ever insatiable, as it presents an ever-increasing bill, and has an appetite which “ grows by what it feeds on.”

The unfair comparisons, made between the politics of the French and those of old governments, provoke a few remarks in this place on the subject. — If the French only *attempt* conquest, the world is said to be undone by the mere attempt; and, when the triumvirate actually *accomplishes* them, *their* conquests are said no more to relate to us than if they were made in the moon; nor to give any cause of uneasiness, as to the views to follow from them in other cases. The French, it is next said, are levellers, and banish men of worth, and silence men of science, and this again is dreadful: but, if an arbitrary prince acts upon the principle of levelling the loftier poppy-heads, and if, by a principle of ostracism, he dooms merit to Siberia or the Bastile, it is supposed in *his* hands to cease to deserve criticism, for the concise reason, that it is only *what has always been*. If a Parisian's carriage is stripped of its horses by the French, the impress of the beast of burthen of the peasant in other countries (which is perhaps the peasant's *little all*) is never set against it; and the tyranny on the side

of France is called, unexampled. If the French direct the people of a new conquest to organize themselves afresh, the overthrow of all municipal law and of ancient forms is immediately announced; without any recollection, that in one brief proclamation, every establishment is changed from one end to the other, by a Russian or Prussian conqueror; of which nothing however is said by the suffering parties, merely because complaint would only add a new measure to their woes.— This uneven distribution of censure, at the same time that it is flagrant, has, however, one mitigation; for, the French have been such great pretenders to justice, that we the more remark *their* deviations from it. It is like the blot falling upon unsullied paper; or, to put the case into the form of a contrast; while we scarcely notice the meretricious or importuning behaviour of a female sinner by profession, we are revolted at the want of timidity in a woman of graver pretensions; and think her character lost, when she attends with interest to the gay sallies and familiarities of a rake.

If we are told (in order to justify the present proceedings of the confederates) that we may legitimately intrude into a country which is lawlessly sacrificing its people and disturbing its neighbours, in order to set it to rights; nothing would be gained by the concession of such a principle. For, first, let us prove the facts; next, let us make the application of the principle equal, and see that the confederates

confederates sacrifice none of *their* people unjustly, and still less in a war to disturb their neighbours; and, thirdly, let us be sure that this interference is not mere pretence, and that, instead of *calming* disturbances and evil doings, we are not *directly* or *indirectly* doubling and redoubling them; and what is still worse, doing so, in order to produce a weakness, which may give an external enemy admission into the heart of France. — But if the French are thus so dreadful, that, from their hands being against every one, the hand of every one ought to be against them; what are we to say to the piratical states of Barbary, whom now and then we have been more than glad to find our friends; or to the American Indians, whose manners are still more destructive, but who have not the less, on that account, partaken in our friendship, and obtained our acceptance of their services.

But as there is no end to the considerations which flow in, I shall terminate by a short address to my countrymen.

‘ You have before you, my friends, the choice  
 ‘ of two evils, — The one is, the revival of the  
 ‘ power of France, in the way in which she is  
 ‘ likely to do you less harm than ever; because,  
 ‘ by her present republican government, she has lost  
 ‘ all her old family connections. — The other evil  
 ‘ is, the general union established among the go-  
 ‘ verning powers of the continent. They have  
 ‘ pledged their forces to form, as it were, a

' fort of *bank*, out of which each is to draw  
 ' assistance, who shall happen to find his subjects  
 ' troublesome; and as it is not likely that there  
 ' will be much delicacy used towards the people  
 ' on this occasion, this is to be deemed a conse-  
 ' deracy not only against licentiousness, but against  
 ' liberty; and a prince, whose *own* nation from  
 ' motives of prudence shall have declared a stand-  
 ' ing army unconstitutional and dangerous, may  
 ' easily frustrate its wise precautions, by obtaining  
 ' assistance from the confederacy. — But, under the  
 ' cover of the infatuation which produced this  
 ' union, the three strongest continental powers  
 ' have superadded another union, for the purpose  
 ' of conquest, having already made a prey of  
 ' Poland: and they are so placed as to be able to  
 ' make their strength still stronger out of other  
 ' spoils, not only in Europe, but Asia and Africa;  
 ' to say nothing of France, which however is the  
 ' only continental power left to aid us in opposing  
 ' them, in case of need. — It is not our proper  
 ' duty to take thought for Hanover, though it  
 ' becomes us to hope, that its close understanding  
 ' with the confederated powers will better answer  
 ' its purpose, both now and hereafter, than can by  
 ' mere reasoning be supposed to be probable. But  
 ' let us consider that Holland, which was led into  
 ' the war by ourselves, and which therefore in  
 ' justice deserves our attention, (I say,) that Hol-  
 ' land may hence easily be forced to embrace a  
 ' continental

continental connection, not only contrary to its own interests, but to ours, especially by *Prussia*; which will be a most serious evil, even should Holland escape immediate conquest. — With respect to our own situation, however safe it may seem from present invasion, we must recollect that we are chiefly a naval power, in consequence of our coasts; but, as Europe also has coasts, a combination in Europe may sooner or later furnish a counter-navy, capable of rendering hazardous the safety of a country like ours, of moderate size, and destitute of fortifications. The same general combination of powers may also, at any time, affect all our various branches of *continental trade*, by hostile edicts. Our East Indies, likewise, are no more safe from Russia, than they would formerly have been from Genghis Khan, or any other of the Eastern territorial conquerors, who should have been bent upon subduing them.—Upon comparing, therefore, the two evils offered for our choice, namely, France restored, or the confederacy triumphant; we shall find, that, while the one evil can only occasionally affect our quiet, the other always must threaten our existence; especially if a future sovereign of our country (and such things may happen) should at any time borrow aid from the *confederates* to destroy our liberty, after being fatigued with the constant trouble of defending it.

' You are told, that the partition of Poland does  
 ' not concern you, by men who nevertheless know  
 ' that the Austrian dominions reach to our channel,  
 ' and that the Prussian dominions extend to Hol-  
 ' land; and whatever Austria and Prussia obtain,  
 ' by means of Poland or other conquests, is like  
 ' strength put into one hand, in order to pass  
 ' it on to the other. — They tell you, also,  
 ' that Poland formerly has had sovereigns given  
 ' to it by force; but they do not add, that it was  
 ' done by comparatively weaker powers, and who  
 ' thereby only gained Poland as a temporary *ally*:  
 ' whereas Poland is now incorporated as a *property*,  
 ' in fee-simple, by great powers, who have still  
 ' larger possessions before them attainable by the  
 ' same infallible means. — These persons, however,  
 ' have added one truth, worth all the rest; namely,  
 ' that we had but one power to aid in opposing  
 ' this partition, which is *France*; France, which  
 ' is now endeavoured to be mutilated and rent  
 ' asunder. — As they gravely confess also, that the  
 ' Polish partition was *irresistible*; ought they not next  
 ' to tell us, by what means we are to prevent the  
 ' too certain absorption of Germany, Turkey, Italy,  
 ' and the North, in due progression; unless by the  
 ' aid of France?

' We hear much of the necessity of precautions  
 ' and security against France being lodged in the  
 ' hands of strangers; but are you not sick of the  
 ' fluctuation of politics, when it is but a few years  
 ' since

' since we were enthusiasts for Maria Theresa of  
 ' Austria ; then became her enemy ; then renewed  
 ' the enmity against Austria under the German  
 ' league ; and again, at the time of the Russian  
 ' armament ; and now, forsooth, seem about to  
 ' seek to strengthen her hands again by barriers  
 ' and by provinces, when she has strengthened her  
 ' *own* hands by an alliance with the whole of Eu-  
 ' rope, and by acquisitions, which, though not yet  
 ' located, are not the less certain, and when to-  
 ' morrow she may relapse and be our bitterest foe ?  
 ' In short, when all Europe is alike given to am-  
 ' bition, is it not idle to take the trouble of making  
 ' one the stake-holder in preference to one another ?

' It is not necessary in any view, that this war  
 ' should end with an *indemnity*, nor has Mr. Pitt  
 ' taught us the policy of it, by his own conduct ;  
 ' for you had no indemnity for his armament for  
 ' Holland, for Nootka-Sound, or for Oczakow ;  
 ' being made contented, in every one of these cases,  
 ' with the generous sentiment, of the *good* you had  
 ' done ; without inquiring into the origin of the  
 ' quarrel, in order to fix who had been most in  
 ' fault, or who had first begun it. — It is not  
 ' therefore out of rule, to end hostile aims without  
 ' delay, when there is an end of the contest which  
 ' has provoked them.

' As to the wisdom of our seeking conquest,  
 ' even were conquest certain ; what more is neces-  
 ' sary to us, after we have attained a magnitude of



' empire sufficient to ensure our own safety ; unless  
 ' we wish to draw upon ourselves the same jealousy,  
 ' which attracted so many enemies to us, during  
 ' the American war ; or wish to force other nations  
 ' into new resources to countervail the influence  
 ' of ours ; or to hazard the same internal evils,  
 ' which have ruined other states when they have  
 ' had too much prosperity and have over-built their  
 ' native bases ? All that is wanting to us, at present,  
 ' seems to be the continuance of a good domestic  
 ' government, and a *separation of interests* pre-  
 ' vailing among the continental powers, (in the  
 ' place of their present union ; ) so as permanently  
 ' to secure a balance of power.

' I do not touch upon the burthens of the war,  
 ' especially of a *land* war, with allies in our pay ;  
 ' because you know and feel them ; and you will  
 ' know and feel them more ; for every war has not  
 ' only taxes to impose during its progress, but  
 ' leaves a *legacy* of them after its close. But  
 ' remember, that war infests communications by  
 ' sea and land, produces a tendency to private  
 ' economy, wastes people and productions, and  
 ' disheartens enterprize ; not only with you, but  
 ' with every nation mixing in or suffering by the  
 ' war ; and that the war has now nearly embraced  
 ' the whole of Europe, and thus has formed ex-  
 ' tensive impediments to trade. Sir William Tem-  
 ' ple gives a striking instance of the influence of  
 ' war upon industry, in the case of the corn-trade ;  
 ' and

and what more important to us and to the human race, than to prevent dearth, (the parent of discontent,) at a period said to be disposed to revolutions?

If our Ministers will not think justly for us, we must reason a little for ourselves. A little confidence towards them is indeed useful; but nothing is more dangerous than its *excess*, because it not only permits but encourages misconduct; which never can be more impolitic, than when every thing may be at stake. — Can you see then, let me ask, any reason for concealing our ultimatum, when no object *can* be so pressing to us, as terminating the war; and nothing so dangerous, as our Ministers having a false object in such a crisis as the present. — They tell you indeed, that they wish not to deceive you, by suffering you to think, that the war will soon be at an end; (a delicacy, which is perhaps designed to atone for the ruin brought upon so many of you, who believed in the official assurances constantly and even lately given you, that the war itself was improbable; and that there was in any event no design of meddling in the interior affairs of France.) But let them, then, mislead neither you on one side, nor foreign powers on the other, by concealing any longer from you the terms in meditation for peace. — Are they afraid of announcing the nature of the peace, lest it should betray the nature of the war? — If it be said, in  
order

order to soothe you, that ministers only talk  
 largely, to hide the real approaching close of the  
 struggle; or to induce the French to resort to better  
 order, as the price of peace; or that in other  
 respects they are sure of their grounds; I reply  
 that a little practice teaches us, that nothing is to  
 be left to conjecture or refinements in great  
 affairs. We must therefore consider ministers as  
 serious in their declarations; and *remonstrate* with  
 them no less seriously; especially, as it will be  
 the best means of inclining the other powers to  
 peace, when they see that they cannot expect aid  
 much longer from this nation.

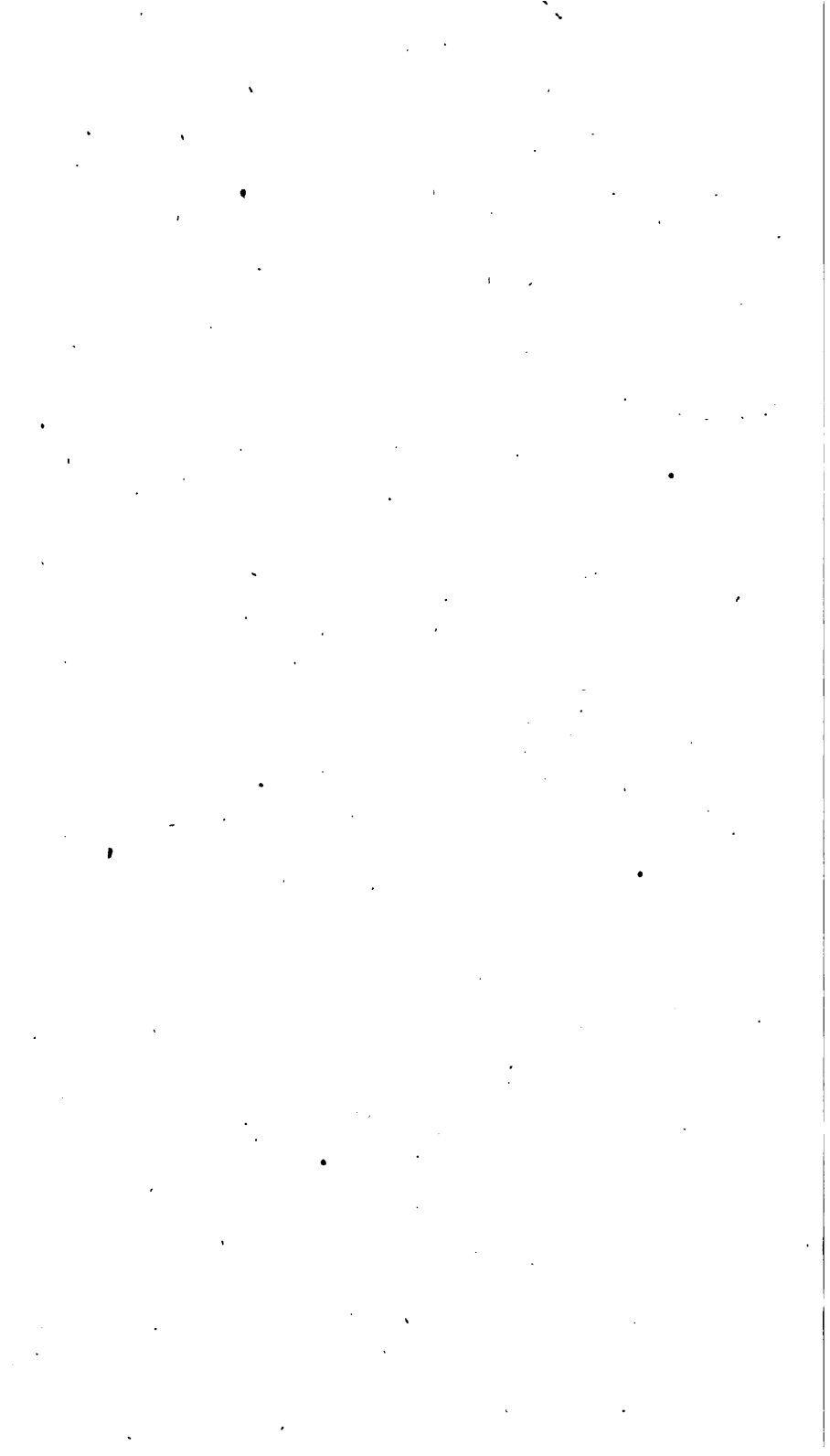
As to the French, if a republic is really their  
 humour, let them have it. Never did Mr. Fox  
 shew more wisdom or firmness, than in proposing  
 to recognise it; his reasons being, as we find,  
*much deeper* than the mere momentary purchase  
 of an accommodation.—Nothing is more evident,  
 than that France was once inclined to join us in  
 inculcating *peace* upon all the world, and that she  
 is now inclined to resist the *continental confederacy*;  
 and can we wish for any thing more? Torn,  
 as she is, with convulsions, her desire is still to  
 survive as France, and as the child of liberty.  
 Had foreigners at no time interfered, her wounds  
 would soon probably have healed (in the language  
 of medical men) by virtue of the first intention;  
 and the mode of still healing them is, instead of  
 throwing into them caustics and irritants, to  
 leave

' leave them to themselves, and to the *vis medicatrix*  
 ' *natura*. When the enemy shall quit their frontier,  
 ' and no longer divert their attention and require  
 ' strong measures; the will of France must prevail  
 ' over its factions, and that will, I trust, is good,  
 ' or with time may become so; but, if not, it is  
 ' *then* that we must have recourse to principles of  
 ' extermination. And provided it is to fight against  
 ' liberty, and still more against licentiousness, never  
 ' let us fear the want of a concurrence for this pur-  
 ' pose among all the arbitrary powers by whom  
 ' Europe too unhappily is governed.'

— But I here drop my pen; and may it be  
 for ever; and while men of a different temper  
 might look for an approval of their labours, all  
 that I have to ask in return for them is a peaceful  
 obscurity.

*A CALM OBSERVER.*

APPENDIX.



A P P E N D I X.\*

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L E T T E R I.

*Published March 1, 1793.*

S I R,

**W**HEN I reassume the signature, under which I commented last year upon the coalition of certain princes against the liberties of Europe, I shall continue to adhere to that moderation which the signature implies ; for, if warmth is ever to be justified, it is only when it is preceded by the coolest disquisition. This rule, meriting adoption by the public, it becomes the public, also, previous to any censure against the French, for having been the first to *declare* war ; to consider how far we left them the means of avoiding this dreadful option,

\* The following letters, being only auxiliary with respect to the object of those which precede, are here placed separately in an Appendix.

An

An unrepaiꝛed aggression is not the only legitimate cause of war ; nor is it that cause upon which the French are called upon to lay the most stress. — It is, therefore, only incidentally that I remark, that we dispute the force of one article of aggression, urged by the French, which yet we ourselves urge as valid against *them* ; I mean the infraction of the commercial treaty. The French, at first, thought that this infraction only warranted a return to that *restricted state of commerce*, which subsisted in 1786 ; but Lord Grenville informed them, that, to annul a treaty of commerce, was an act so heinous, that it would preclude *all negotiation* even for *peace*. — It is the more remarkable that we should cavil at the French for afterwards adopting *our own* harsher interpretation of such an incident, by placing it among the causes of their declaration of war ; when we ourselves have most offended against this very treaty. If the French made a law, respecting passports, which affected all citizens and all aliens among them, without any distinctions ; we not only made a law, which operated against aliens singly, and was also avowedly aimed only against aliens of the French nation ; but we farther violated the commercial treaty, by forbidding, *in the middle of December last*, the export even of *foreign* corn to France, (though we allowed it to be exported to other nations ; ) our express motive being, that of checking “ an *enemy* in the act of *hostile preparations*.”

This

This leads us to consider a second\* legitimate cause of war; namely, a well-founded fear, that *hostilities are intended*. There are, in truth, few acts of aggression which are in themselves fit causes of war; most of them only becoming so, inasmuch as, if submitted to, they might encourage aggressions still more intolerable. — But there is scarcely one particular, enumerated in the French declaration of war, which was not at least an indication of our design of war, or at least of our carelessness as to peace. For example, the affair of the alien-bill, and of foreign corn; our armaments, and especially those by sea, when we had no maritime enemy to threaten us; our bitter and hostile language against the French nation; our virtual countenance given to the coalition of princes; our withdrawing our own ambassador from France, and expelling theirs from England; our open countenance at the same time of *active* French insurgents; and our marked preference to the cause of their king, not only since, but long before, his death, (while we constantly pretended *neutrality* as to the internal affairs of France;) these circumstances, particularly when viewed conjunctively, were each strong symptoms of meditated hostility. — But the particulars of the proceedings towards M. Chauvelin complete the demonstration.

\* Our parliamentary debates had been confined to the discussion of the first cause of war,



Our ministry, having assigned to M. Chauvelin a character which he had *long and openly* renounced, namely, of being the representative to Louis XVI. and having refused to him the only character which he claimed, namely, of being the representative of the French republic; would receive no papers from him but those, in which he assumed no description at all; and these communications were what they termed *un-official*. It being conceived, from some of Lord Grenville's expressions, that a defect might lie in the want of formal credentials from the republic; these credentials were soon supplied, but only to produce a more decided repulse. — About this time it was, that the bearer of a dispatch to M. Chauvelin having been subjected to a rigorous search in England, and, at the same time, our alien-bill having given to M. Chauvelin a farther alarm, even for his own person and papers, he put the following alternative to Lord Grenville: Either absolutely refuse to hear me, or afford security to my correspondence; and, at the same time, tell me whether my person is to be protected. To this, our ministry replied: that, “ especially after what had just passed in “ France,” (namely the king's condemnation,) “ M. Chauvelin, as agent, charged with a confidential communication, *might* certainly have expected the necessary measures, on our part, for “ the safety of his letters and of his messengers; “ and that, as minister from the Most Christian “ King, he *would* have enjoyed all the exemptions “ which

“ which the law grants to public ministers, recognized as such; but that, as a *private person*, he cannot but return to the general mass of foreigners resident in England.” In three days afterwards he was told, that his character and functions, so long suspended, being entirely terminated by the “*fatal death*” of the king, he had no more a public character here, where his farther residence was forbidden. — Eight days were allowed for his departure; and, as if the insult was not otherwise strong enough, the order for it was *Gazetted*.

Thus *negotiation was rendered impossible* to the French; (for negotiation cannot be carried on without ministers, without safeguard to correspondence, and without free communication;) and, during a state of armament and of menace, to refuse negotiation is clearly to announce hostility. — This conclusion is the more forcible, as it seemed perfectly easy for our administration to have avoided all difficulty of form, by establishing in the way of a *salvo jure*, that, as no immediate recognition of the republic should be required from us; so no momentary acquiescence in the mode, under which the French might think proper to describe themselves, should finally bind us. — The French, therefore, perceiving their situation to be thus without an alternative, expressed their sense of it; not by ordering any expeditions in secret, but by frankly and publicly *declaring war*.

To this charge administration reply, that if M. Chauvelin had had any thing farther to urge, they were still ready to have listened to it.—Did they signify this to M. Chauvelin? On the contrary, had they not told him that he was bereft of all public character, and had not even the shadow of a public representative? Was M. Chauvelin then, at the moment of his precipitate departure, or was M. Maret, his intended substitute, abruptly to resume a negotiation, before they were assured that their principals (when instructed in what had happened) might not wish to vary their terms, if not to break off the treaty?—Did not Lord Auckland, our *own* ambassador at the Hague, think it necessary to ask permission to accept Dumourier's overture for a meeting in Holland; before he felt authorised (though only in a collateral situation) barely to receive propositions? And were the direct and primary negotiators of a jealous republic to show less deference to their principals than Lord Auckland?—Before, however, M. Maret could obtain fresh instructions, M. Maret was dismissed by our ministry as ignominiously, as had been M. Chauvelin before him.

That ministry had no objection to M. Chauvelin personally, appears from their own shewing; for, they treated with him before his dismissal, and have since declared that they had no objection to listen to him after it.—Thus, then, was the negotiation checked at a critical moment; and when the  
French

French so little expected it, that they had sent a new minister to London; and had offered to open a second and auxiliary negotiation in Holland, through the commander in chief of their army. — This check was the more to be lamented, as the negotiation, viewing the actual course of many former negotiations, had made more than usual progress; for the French had abandoned the question of the Meuse, had transferred the question of the Scheldt to the Belgians, had engaged to leave the Belgians finally to themselves, (though certainly without fixing the time for it,) and had appeared ready to qualify their decree about fraternity. These were concessions, which, when joined with the known interest of the French, and with the fact of their having refrained from attacking Holland, in November, when it lay at their feet; and, with their having, for two months, with great temper and assiduity, negotiated with a power which refused to acknowledge even their *capacity* to treat; promised a happy pacification; or, in any event, will acquit the French of having been the *immediate* causers of the war. — Those who create a just *fear* of hostilities, and those who refuse negotiation, are the makers of war; and not those, who simply *declare* it. To terminate peace, is to begin war; for *FINIS coronat opus*.

In this discussion I have no where alluded to the insulted pride and wounded honour of the French; though, to these topics, Englishmen on *their* side

would have been deeply sensible. — But I have supposed ourselves *privileged* to shew disdain and superiority, and to neglect all methods that were conciliatory; — and have only contented myself with proving, that when the French decided upon war, they were entitled to suppose that we ourselves had been the *first* to form that decision; and that, being thus driven to the wall, they only resisted, because they could hope for no retreat.

If it be now asked, why these statements are made? It is answered, that we may know the truth, and may proportion our feelings to it; and not pursue the war wildly, or contract dangerous or burthenesome alliances upon account of it, or reject a peace unnecessarily, or foster undue prejudices; from a *false* persuasion, that the French have *wantonly* declared war against us. — Whether or not the French furnished the first or greatest provocations, or whether it was fitting or not to negotiate with them at all, are questions which I shall examine hereafter. — But it is only necessary to shew, in *this* place, that administration having conceded the propriety of treaty with them, the treaty was abruptly terminated by us in a manner that took away from the French all hope of an alternative, when they decided upon war, in the manner consonant with the forms of their present government.

A CALM OBSERVER.

Feb. 27. 1793.

LETTER

## L E T T E R II.

*Published March 13, 1793.*

S I R,\*

**M**ANY of the friends of war tell us, that the war was indispensable, because it was *unwise to negotiate* with the French. Upon this  
 B b 3 occasion,

\* When this letter was first published, it was not prudent to advise an accommodation with France, without apology. The following introduction, therefore, was given to the above letter.

Those, who admire the proceedings of our Administration towards the French, are not content with this desirable privilege, but put every fair examiner to the following dilemma. If the examiner argues with reserve and timidity, it is said, that no room offers for criticism; and, if he argues frankly and forcibly, he is stigmatized as the friend and advocate of the French. — For myself, I beg to be understood to write in behalf of *caution* only, and not of the *French*; since even those, who incline only to *one* side of the question, ought in prudence and justice, to consider the case as it stands on *both* sides. Is it not fast travelling which insures our being in the right road; for, it may only carry us farther from home; so that the first point always to decide is, whether we are right as to the road.

If it be contended, that a question respecting the war is now too *late* for consideration, we answer, that a knowledge  
 of

occasion, we must take the part of Ministry, who have actually negotiated with the French, in defiance of

of justice and common sense never comes too late, provided it only tends to abridge for a moment the period of injustice and of error. To continue the war merely because we have *begun* it, is an argument, which not only will operate with the *French* to continue the war equally, and equally obstinately, on their part; but which goes to justify the indefinite prolongation of every war. — A recent war, however, may just as properly be terminated by peace, as may a war of long continuance; for, no one, for example, has censured either Frederick of Prussia or the Emperor Joseph for having discovered, during their idle rupture about Bavaria, that it was mutually wise to make a speedy peace before they had fought a single battle.

To the public, peace is always a blessing, and inquiry always a duty; and, if this be true, it is incumbent upon the public, not to take blindly for granted, either that the French have been inexcusable or incorrigible in the present dispute; or that our Ministers, on their side, are wholly free from blame. — In the first place, if we should assent to the fact in general, yet still much question would remain, both as to the *degree* and as to the *cause* of the criminality of the French. In the next place, as Ministry suffer no check in their operations, in consequence of inquiry, (for, the votes of Parliament give them men and money at pleasure,) let us beware, lest a momentary *unanimity*, in *applauding a war with France*, should end in introducing a permanent scene of *discord at home*. — The case, therefore, is too important for us to surrender ourselves implicitly, respecting it, to Ministry; because, to abandon all inquiry, is to abandon ourselves solely to the *fate of events*, to which none but men destitute of sense will ever submit themselves. Indeed, if we consult history, we shall

of these very persons; (and we hope that Ministry will not disdain the assistance.) — But we must first desire, that a distinction may be made between a negotiation for *peace* and a negotiation for *alliance*; for, in order to demonstrate that it is not fit to make a peace with France, some ingenious speakers have endeavoured to prove, that France is a power which is “*un-alliable*.” So different, however, are the two propositions, of a peace and an alliance

shall find our wars to have been commonly so unjust, so unprofitable, and so ridiculous; that nothing can be more advisable than to encourage, as a general principle, the most rigorous and incessant examination into the object, means, and consequences, of every war.

But why is it that we are so adverse to this inquiry? If it is because we *have* inquired already, then inquiry, it seems, is a measure, which in itself is perfectly admissible; and, if we have not inquired, since inquiry may either serve to confirm the friends of Ministry, if they are right, or induce them to stop short if they are wrong, in either way it may be beneficial, and in no way can be detrimental. — In short, to exclaim against inquiry, upon this occasion, is to exclaim against a search after candor, justice, and prudence: and, if *any* inquiry whatever is proper, the same reason, which makes it proper, makes it proper also, that it should be both *fundamental and impartial*. — As to motives, those of an anonymous writer cannot easily be the subject of discussion; but it is open to all to observe, that the minority in Parliament, on this occasion, have at least the appearance of disinterestedness in their favour; as they have withstood the torrent of public opinion without any other present effect than that of depriving themselves of popularity.



with France, that there are some who contend, (and as appears most wisely,) that it is the interest of England to be at *peace with all powers*, and in *permanent alliance with none*.

The best mode of considering the propriety of negotiating with the French, is to consider *the nature of the prejudices against such a negotiation*, which all seem to stand upon this common principle; namely, that the French are become so horrid a people, that for general security, they must either be converted, weakened, or exterminated; — a principle, which after all, will only become reasonable, when it shall be farther proved, first, that war is the *only* instrument proper to be employed upon such an occasion; and, next, that it is *practicable*, by means of war, to accomplish the end in view; not only in a permanent and substantial manner, but upon such easy terms, as that the benefit obtained shall be equivalent to its expence, its hazards, and its mischiefs.

The first objection, which occurs to negotiating with the French, is their *antipathy to the existing Governments of Europe*. They have no King; and it is said, that they detest them all, and will ally with none: in other words (like the Greeks of old) they deem *King* and *Tyrant* to be synonymous. — But, taking the narrower line in politics, and viewing France as our rival, is it not an advantage to us that she should have principles, which insulate  
her

her from all Europe; and thus turn every power, which is either monarchical or aristocratical, against her; and which consequently more than *doubly* favour us, by stripping *her* of her allies, and giving them to *us*, without the burthen of a treaty? — Do we lament, that we have thus all the world before us where to choose; and do we desire, by restoring France to social principles, again to restore her to that ascendancy which she obtained through them, in the hands of the Bourbons? — No, let her be churlish, *acariâtre*, and wanting in all the charities, and indulge in a cynic language; or let her be pacific or self-confident, and assume a philosophic or romantic language; in *either* way, she is harmless to us. Perhaps human wisdom could not devise for us a more fortunate temper and situation, than that of France; for, proud in the persuasion and sentiment of her forces, she thinks that she is sufficient to herself; and that when she arrives at peace, she will need neither ally, fleet, nor army; but, trusting to her militia, may wrap herself in her mantle, and, careless of the world, pursue her theories at home. — This is not conjecture, but fact; for she has lately notoriously disdained a connection with Spain, and, as is confidently said, with Prussia also; nor, as will be proved quickly, is the example of such a conduct *single in the world*, even at the present moment.

There

There is a second objection urged against being at peace with the French, which is its *system of fraternization* with foreign people.—As I shall, in a future letter, enlarge upon this objection\*, I shall only remark here, that the system of fraternization is of very recent date in France, having been provoked by the *Concert of Princes*, which it was intended to oppose and retaliate;—and, if in its effects it proves a system of aggrandizement, such a system surely is not peculiar to France. It is upon principles still more questionable, namely, without reference to consent, without equality in the connection, and without the grant of a representative form of government; that *other* states aggrandize themselves, without scruple, and without remorse; of which our own successive acquisitions in the East, and the dismemberments of Poland, are ample evidence.—And is it no advantage, supposing conquest to be virtually the French system, that at least it cannot with France be made a *clandestine* system; owing to the publicity of the French proceedings? With them, it is only the arrow that flieth by day; while the same system in courts is the pestilence that walketh by night; for France, even though she acts alone, thinks in every case *aloud*; while courts, on the other hand, contrive their mischief, and procure their abettors in it, under the veil of secrecy, and with all the stillness of

\* See p. 260 and 273.

death.—Nor is *the municipal law* of conquered nations at all more respected by the triple alliance, for instance, in Poland, than it has been by the French in Belgia; and as to *corporate property*, not excepting that of the church, the Emperor Joseph and our own Henry the VIIIth have as little held it sacred as the French.

Yes; but the French are too *faible*s and too *unstable* for negotiation. — Without defending France, let us compare her in this respect with those states, by whose aid we propose to correct her vices.—As to *Prussia*, (whose very growth into monarchy was the result of intrigue and of violence,) her celebrated Frederic in his youth, publicly criticised Machiavel, in order to veil his passion for Silesia; and, afterwards, in his riper years, justified upon system the breach of treaties the most solemn; while his successor, in seven short years, has in turn first courted, and immediately afterwards deceived, five several states, namely, Turkey, Brabant, Saxony, Poland, and Austria.—Next comes *Holland*, a state at all times selfish, but which was supposed, during the American war, to merit an attack on our part, in return for positive hostilities on hers, in defiance of bonds of alliance; and thrice, since that time, have her divisions put the Stadtholder, who is our sole dependance, into danger, and rendered her connection with France highly probable.—As to *Austria*, immediately after she had been restored to her ancient pride, by the  
help

help of England, she humbled herself again at the feet of the still prouder mistress of Louis XV. in order to obtain an alliance with France; and she has, subsequently to that period, attempted various infringements of the Germanic constitution; as well as sought to open the navigation of the Scheldt, contrary to the very treaty now pretended to be supported; besides persecuting the clergy, so as to bring the Pope to Vienna, on the vain task of supplicating lenity to them; and, besides, also repeatedly breaking its engagements with the Belgians, so as to drive them into madness and revolt.—Since *Sardinia* forms part of this group of allies, we must not forget, that, in the time of Louis XIV, one of its princes, *twice* within a few years, separated his troops from his allies, in the *open field*, in order from an ally to become an enemy; and that, if history ever exhibited an instance of princely cunning being hereditary, it is in the Savoy family; which has latterly only crept into the shape of royalty, by the very wiles and manœuvres, which have at the same time so largely increased its dominions. — As to *Spain*, our intended new ally, we have seen how little her alliance has profited France; for, though France has always fairly and with real effect adopted the Spanish quarrels, (even since the Revolution,) yet Spain has commonly lingered on her side with respect to France, till her junction has become nearly useless, and then has gone to war,

led

led to it like a tottering child; and Spain at present exhibits the farther evils, of minister as fluctuating as those of France, of a Court governed by folly and by low adultery, and of a nation disposed to revolt from domestic causes that are wholly distinct from French principles. — I shall not touch farther on this subject, though the dead Gustavus, the living Catharine, and the kingdom of Portugal, each afford as ample themes as *any* of the preceding.

But, in order to do complete justice to the comparison between the French and their opponents under this head, it is necessary to give a key to some of the voracity objected to France. — After a series of ministers in France had been created and dismissed, *previous* to the acquisition of power by the first Assembly, the flight of the King, in June, 1791, occasioned a general change of sentiment in the French; but, at a moment when that Assembly was itself adopting moderation and re-establishing order, the court favoured two decrees calculated (and I fear designed) to produce a *general confusion*; the one, having for its object to dissolve that Assembly, and the other, to prevent the re-election of any of its deputies into the Assembly to follow. Thus France was put to sea again, in the midst of tempests, without any chart to guide it; unaccommodating men took the lead in the new Assembly; the emperor threatened, and produced a formidable war without; the king resisted the temper of the times, and

and occasioned his own dethronement within; and republicanism, which, for some time, had been only smothered, became the established government. Thus far, the French, urged by opposition and by events, used progressive measures to establish their original principles, their means becoming more decisive in proportion to resistance and to danger; (for, few will assert, that their first constitution was either so recognized abroad, or so supported by the higher orders at home, as ever to have had even a common chance of succeeding). — Thus far, then, *events led the way*, and *men followed* them or not, according to their sagacity or their sentiments. Thus, then, in proportion to external pressure, the vast mass of the French revolution has descended from time to time, in order to seek the base that would best bear its increasing weight; and, in its way, it has passed, in succession, all those actors in it, who have resolved to remain at their original stations. If it shall hereafter be still more pressed by incumbent forces, it will plunge yet deeper and deeper, till attempts be made to bottom it upon agrarian laws, which, of all others, are calculated to animate the *most* hearts, and arm the *most* hands in its defence; for, as the present French leaders are not only *theorists without property*, but also (to use the words of the poet) “strong with the fear of death,” they will abstain from no popular measure whatever, appearing necessary to their safety and success. — This, then, without mixing in detail,

detail, is (with only one principal exception commencing in September last), the secret of what is called, "the want of faith and of consistency" in the French; of which the moving principle, it will be perceived, lies in the hands of *those*, who add to the burthens and difficulties of France, and who thus blame what they in effect create. — To *England*, France had long looked with fondness, as imagining her to possess a bold and kindred love of liberty; and they still point their eager affections to America and Poland, as sufferers in their own cause; so that impartial men will probably allow, that the French would at least be true to treaties concluded with the *two last-named* countries. But those, who expect that France should be true also to *all* the old French treaties with other powers, (though she has, in fact, been true to most of them,) as being the *only* pledge by which to judge of her sincerity, as to the terms of a *general peace* at present; I say, such persons exact unfairly and with rigour; since great revolutions, whether respecting the person of a prince, or the constitution of a government, have always, if necessary, been followed by a subversion of the several foreign treaties which preceded them.

There are next certain *dogmas or tenets* current among the French, which, while they are current, are by some thought justifiable obstacles to negotiating even with the whole nation; which, as we are now in actual war, seems in effect to be saying, that we  
are



are to continue the war as long as they prevail. These dogmas are of the following description; viz.

“ The right, and even duty, of insurrection, in  
 “ certain cases; the natural equality of man; the  
 “ sovereignty of the people in a conventional, if not  
 “ in a legislative, sense; the amenability of kings  
 “ to trial; the assassination of successful tyrants,  
 “ &c.” — Many of these doctrines are to be found  
 in English writers, who have been favoured by the  
 Hanoverian family now upon our throne; and some  
 of the most equivocal of them are read in the an-  
 cient classics with frequent enthusiasm. But I must  
 farther observe, that these positions have mostly a  
*domestic application* in the eyes of France; and that,  
 in any event, they are only to be considered under  
 the shape of *sedition publications*; the authors of  
 which write in society, instead of writing individu-  
 ally; and the spread of which, being *already effected*  
*in France*, it only remains for us, if propagated a-  
 mong ourselves, to oppose them by our domestic  
 laws and domestic efforts. — The French, indeed,  
 seem highly censurable for the latitude given to  
 their press, even when directly aimed to excite the  
 worst of overt acts, and probably derive their chief  
 internal misfortunes from this *theoretical* error; but  
 to wage an interminable war with a nation, because  
 of its loose libel-laws, seems a little novel; especi-  
 ally when we farther recollect, that the persecution  
 of France for this object will be useless, unless we

can.

can regulate the press in every *other* country besides upon the globe.

Thus far we have recited only *political* objections to negotiating with the French ; but we shall now briefly mention some *sentimental* ones, which however form a sort of prudery, that scarcely merits deep discussion. — The first of these impressions is owing to the supposed *atheism* of the French *nation* ; which might be combated by a peremptory denial of the fact from personal knowledge ; though I must admit, that many *individuals* doubt, and not a few deny, the existence of a God. But I have often asked, (as I find the respectable Mr. Wyvil has done,) why it is, if this species of argument is valid, that we send an embassy to China ; the Governors of which country, according to Mr. Hume, are the only regular body of *deists* in the universe ; being the disciples of Confucius, and having no priests or religious establishment whatever ! In spite of my respect for religion, and for its *capacity* to render the utmost services to society, I must acknowledge, from this and other examples, that an establishment for it is not *indispensable* to good order ; because China, on the whole, is an orderly, moral, and, what is still more in point, a pacific, empire. China, indeed, is the instance, to which I alluded above, of a nation which is at once *secluded and pacific*, owing to the peculiarity of its maxims, and the consciousness of its strength ; in-

much, that it neglects even the ordinary means proper for its defence to such a point, as, in defiance of its stupendous population, to have become the prey even of a handful of Tartars. Perhaps French irreligion is the more insisted upon at this moment, as the claims of Kings, in the present dispute, are now again pretended to be derived, not from compact and from *human* right, but from right divine: which right, it is clear, would fail before an infidel tribunal! — Another *sensimental* objection to the condescending to treat of peace with France is taken from the pretended *cruelty of the French*; which however forms no objection to our treating with the *Barbary Powers*, and even, at times, to protecting them, (solely from views of commerce or policy;) though these pirates are the *known and systematic* foes to the *peace*, the public and private *property*, the personal and national *liberty*, and the true *religion*, of all mankind. Without however controverting or modifying this charge of cruelty against the French, yet we must at least assert, that the Duke of Brunswick and his superiors have fully *counter-balanced* it, so as to leave us nothing to distinguish between them. We may also add, that when an oppressed people resume their rights, the sense of past injuries, and the fear of the return of them, may well both induce and excuse considerable violence. Thus the war of the *League* in France was bitter in all ranks, because affecting all of them; the war of the *Fronde* was bitter in  
none,

none, because affecting only a few; and the war of *resisted liberty*, if it continues, will be bitter in all of them again.—As to the *death of the king*, which none deplore, and which few have laboured to prevent, more than myself; as I reserve it as the topic of a future letter,\* I shall only here assert, that, if kings are made for nations and not nations for kings, it is contrary to all principle to exterminate a *nation* in order to expiate a crime towards a *king, who is* at the same time *dead*. Does not our religion teach us to be diffident in judgment, prompt in charity, slow in vengeance, and earnest to reclaim those who are in error? and shall we rashly seek to extinguish an immense nation for an act, in which a few only took the lead, in which a minority only has concurred, and of which three-quarters of the whole nation, either by age or other circumstances, were incapable of forming any judgment. Gracious heaven; shall we deprive twenty-six millions of men, *women and children*, of their *natural* existence, because one of their number has perished, who was clothed with an artificial *political* existence, given to him for their sakes and not for his own! What man, duly conscious of his own nothingness and subordination to the universal Creator, can look upwards to that Being from whom his own existence is but a loan, and say that he, wretched mortal, has a right,

\* See p. 310.

upon the strength of his fallible judgment, to seek to exterminate so large a portion of the human race, as nearly *one-fourth* of the population of our quarter of the *globe*? Did we in England seriously labour to *avert* the catastrophe we affect to lament? Did not many of us too *certainly* rejoice that it happened, in order that we might be entitled to exercise resentment for it? And is not the precedent of all that took place borrowed from a fatal trial in our *own* history; and are we not ourselves, notwithstanding, the living proofs how much more easy it is for time and for Providence to restore a nation quietly and without bloodshed to its senses, than for Cossacks, Tartars, and all the tribe of military horrors?

In my letter published on the 1st of March, I argued, that the French were impelled to *declare* war by the moral probability that we had ourselves *predetermined* it; and by the physical *impossibility* of their negotiating, where we had refused safeguard to their correspondence and residence to their negotiator. In my present letter, I have combated *negatively* the prejudices against such a negotiation; whether of a political or of a moral nature; thoroughly convinced on the latter subject, that nothing can be more contradictory, than to employ one moral sentiment to destroy another; and that a lisping effeminacy is often a cover to the hardest of hearts. — In my next letter, I shall consider the various *positive* motives subsisting for negotiation,

negotiation, in order to induce to terminate by it the present unhappy war.\*

*A CALM OBSERVER.*

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The following passage, respecting the Polish Revolution, extracted from Mr Burke's *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*.

“ THE state of Poland was such, that there  
 “ scarcely exist two opinions, but that a re-  
 “ formation of its constitution, even at some ex-  
 “ pence of blood, might be seen without much dis-  
 “ approbation. No confusion could be feared in  
 “ such an enterprize ; because the establishment to  
 “ be reformed was itself a state of confusion. A king  
 “ without authority ; nobles without union or su-  
 “ bordination ; a people without arts, industry,  
 “ commerce, or liberty ; no order within ; no de-  
 “ fence without ; no effective *public* force, but a  
 “ *foreign* force, which entered a naked country at  
 “ will, and disposed of every thing at pleasure : —  
 “ Here was a state of things which seemed to in-  
 “ vite, and might, perhaps, justify bold enter-  
 “ prize and desperate experiment. But in what  
 “ manner was this chaos brought into order ? The  
 “ means were as striking to the imagination, as

\* See p. 190, 210, and 221.

“ satisfactory

" satisfactory to the reason and soothing to the mo-  
 " ral sentiments. — In contemplating that change,  
 " humanity has every thing to rejoice and to glory  
 " in; nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to suffer.  
 " So far as it has gone, it probably is the most  
 " pure and defecated public good, which ever has  
 " been conferred on mankind. We have seen a-  
 " narchy and servitude at once removed; a throne  
 " strengthened for the protection of the people,  
 " without trenching on their liberties; all *foreign*  
 " cabal banished, by changing the crown from  
 " elective to hereditary; and what was a matter of  
 " pleasing wonder, we have seen a reigning king;  
 " from an heroic love to his country, exerting  
 " himself with all the toil, the dexterity, the ma-  
 " nagement, the intrigue, in favour of a family of  
 " strangers; with which ambitious men labour for  
 " the aggrandizement of their own. *Ten millions of*  
 " *men* in a way of being freed gradually, and,  
 " therefore, safely to themselves and the state, not  
 " from civil or political chains, which, bad as they  
 " are, only fetter the mind; but from substantial  
 " personal bondage. Inhabitants of cities, before  
 " without privileges, placed in the consideration  
 " which belongs to that improved and connecting  
 " situation of social life. One of the most proud,  
 " numerous, and fierce, bodies of nobility and  
 " gentry ever known in the world, arranged only  
 " in the foremost rank' of free and generous citi-  
 " zens. Not one man incurred loss or suffered  
 " degradation. All, from the king to the day-  
 " labourer, were improved in their condition.  
 " Every thing was kept in its place and order;  
 " but in that place and order every thing  
 " was bettered. To add to this happy wonder,  
 " (this unheard-of conjunction of wisdom and for-  
 " tune,) not one drop of blood was spilled; no  
 " treachery;

“ treachery; no outrage; no system of slander,  
 “ more cruel than the sword; no studied insults on  
 “ religion, morals, or manners; *no spoil; no con-*  
 “ *fiscation*; no citizen beggared; none imprisoned;  
 “ *none exiled*: the whole was effected with a policy,  
 “ a discretion, an unanimity, and secrecy, such as  
 “ have never been before known on any occasion;  
 “ but such wonderful conduct was reserved for this  
 “ glorious conspiracy in favour of the true and  
 “ genuine rights and interests of men. Happy  
 “ people, if *they* know to proceed as they have  
 “ begun! Happy prince, worthy to begin with  
 “ splendor, or to close with glory, a race of pa-  
 “ triots and kings: and to leave

“ A name, which every wind to heav’n would bear,  
 “ Which men, to speak, and angels, joy, to hear.

“ To finish all — this great good, as in the instant  
 “ it is, contains in it the seeds of all *farther* im-  
 “ provement; and may be considered as in a regu-  
 “ lar progress, because founded on similar princi-  
 “ ples, towards the stable excellence of a British  
 “ constitution.

“ Here was a matter for congratulation and for  
 “ festive remembrance through ages. Here mo-  
 “ ralists and divines might indeed relax in their  
 “ temperance to exhilarate their humanity.”

THE END.

JAN 6 1922



